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THE QUEEN OF CAKES

Following a long Platinum Jubilee weekend, why not prolong celebrations? And who better than cake maker to royalty and the stars Mich Turner to create patriotic bakes – perfect for sharing with family and friends at picnics and gatherings



BERRIES & CREAM JUBILEE PARTY CAKES

Makes 16 even-sized portions Takes 50-55 minutes

“With the exception of the milk, all ingredients should be at room temperature.”

INGREDIENTS

- 200g/7oz softened unsalted butter
- 200g/7oz golden caster sugar
- 200g/7oz eggs beaten (4 large)

- 2 tsp vanilla bean paste
- 200g/7oz self-raising flour
- 60-75ml/2½-3fl oz milk
- 75g/3oz chopped pistachios

For the syrup

- 50g/2oz golden caster sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

To assemble

- 300ml/½pt double cream

- 75g/3oz caster sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla bean paste
- Fresh seasonal berries – raspberries, blueberries and redcurrants
- 20g/¾oz chopped roasted pistachios

1. Preheat oven to 190°C, 375°F,

Gas 5 and line a 20x30cm/8x12in loose-bottomed rectangular baking tray with non-stick baking paper.

2. With the exception of the milk, all ingredients should be at room temperature. Cream together the butter and sugar until pale and light. Add the beaten eggs slowly, a little at a time, until fully mixed. ▶

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Mich with her masterpiece at Expo 2020's UK Pavilion

Described as the “Bentley of cake makers” by chef Gordon Ramsay, Mich Turner has made cakes all her life, with her earliest memory of baking, as she recalls, being “standing on a chair in the kitchen, making pastry shortbread biscuits, rubbing the butter – it was margarine back then – into the flour, using a rolling pin and biscuit press”.

“I would role-play talking to my imaginary audience, explaining what I was doing, pretending to be Delia Smith – I used to watch her on kids’ TV on a Saturday morning.”

Fast forward to today, and her client list reads like a who’s who of international A-listers and royals. With her Little Venice Cake Company opening an atelier bakery at Atlantis The Royal, Dubai, later this summer, HELLO! talks

exclusively to Mich about her recent creation for (the pandemic-delayed) Expo 2020 in Dubai, cakes she’s baked for royalty and more...

Mich, this is a very special commemorative year of celebrations for the Queen but 2007 was a royally special year for you, when you made a diamond wedding anniversary cake for Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh. Tell us more...

“It is always an honour to design and create cakes for members of the royal family. For the Queen’s diamond wedding anniversary cake, I drew inspiration from the embroidery detail on Her Majesty’s wedding gown – intricate stars with hand-piped pearls and beads. I separated the three oversized tiers with hand-moulded white sugar roses and studded these with Swarovski crystals to acknowledge the 60 diamond years.

“I offered the rich fruit cake as a gift to Her Majesty and Prince Philip, which I delivered to Buckingham Palace for a private royal family Christmas lunch. The Queen then took the top tier with her to Sandringham House to enjoy over Christmas.”

You visited Expo 2020 Dubai (which ran until 31 March 2022) – where dignitaries included the Duke of Cambridge – and created a legendary cake. It was a 4ft, eight-tier masterpiece featuring 1,000 hand-moulded sugar crystals and Union flag detailing. What was your inspiration for the design?

“A cake to represent the nation! The UK Pavilion embraced a theme to Celebrate Extraordinary. As with all the projects where I am employed as a consultant, the skill was identifying, interpreting and answering the brief. My creation emphasised how

from one United Kingdom we feed in the elementary fundamentals which, in turn, fuel, inspire, excite and encourage a nation to achieve, succeed, learn and lead.

“The 24in base vanilla cake layered with chocolate ganache was draped in a sugar Union flag to represent one United Kingdom. The front hand-iced plaques acknowledged Expo 2020, Dubai UAE and the Great campaign. The upper tiers were separated from the base tier with 70 handmade white sugar roses made up of more than 1,000 petals – a symbol of love, trust, loyalty and youth to represent the Platinum Jubilee of the Queen.

“Iced biscuit shards embraced the power and importance of mobility, sustainability, opportunity, diversity and unity that all feed into the UK – from which the upper tiers of hand-painted and hand-piped designs celebrated the arts, literature, science, engineering, innovation, education, music, theatre, sport, wellness and health.

“The top decoration was a representation of Al Wasl Dome at Expo 2020, draped in an iced version of the Union flag – centre stage for the formal and musical entertainment on the day. In total, it took over 600 hours to create.”

This isn’t your only venture in Dubai. Tell us about your Little Venice Cake Company and its links with Atlantis The Royal, your first atelier bakery outside of the UK.

“Guests, visitors and residents will be able to enjoy the most exquisite and totally indulgent cakes baked fresh daily, a personalised collection available to order, or completely bespoke designs with exclusive tastings in our Royal Consultation Room, housing photos, certificates and memorabilia collected over 20 years.

“I have partnered with carefully selected British brands to curate exclusive collections of fine bone china finished with 24-carat gold, English-grown tea, sterling silverware, craft baking kits and a selection of my award-winning recipe books. The highlight will be our glass atelier kitchen – constant theatre to view our talented cake artist pastry chefs at work.”

Is there one bake that holds a special place in your heart?

“The one that comes instantly to mind has to be my own wedding cake, especially as my husband and I are celebrating our silver 25th wedding anniversary later this year. It was a four-tier rich fruit and carrot cake, with hand-piped lace embroidery and fresh red roses.

“In addition to making our wedding cake, I made one for the bride and groom who were marrying in the same hotel on the same day in the ballroom next door. I remind my husband, often, that I didn’t even have a day off on our wedding day! We saved the top tier of our cake and served this at our elder son’s christening. He is now turning 20 and off to university.”

‘It is always an honour to design and create cakes for members of the royal family’

Stir in the vanilla bean paste.

3. Sieve the flour into the mixture and fold in with a metal spoon or spatula. Add the milk to achieve a dropping consistency and stir in 50g/2oz of the pistachios. Spoon the mix into the prepared baking tray and sprinkle with the remaining pistachios. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes until risen, even and golden. Remove from the oven and cool on a wire rack.

4. While the cake is baking, make a syrup, heating together the sugar with 50ml/2fl oz water and the vanilla extract until dissolved. As soon as the cake comes out of the oven, spike all over with a bamboo skewer and brush with all the syrup. Leave to cool in the tin, cover and chill to firm. Turn out and cut into 16 even-sized portions.

5. To assemble, whip the cream, sugar and vanilla paste together until voluminous and firm but still glossy. Be careful not to over-whip.

6. Fit a large piping bag with an open star nozzle and fill with the cream. Pipe each party cake with a generous swirl of fresh cream, dress with the fresh berries and sprinkle with chopped pistachios. Serve immediately.



‘This is the go-to favourite cake in our house. I developed this recipe with the Queen in mind’

BESPOKE BAKING

Mich’s Little Venice Cake Company has created cakes for the Queen and stars, with Dame Emma Thompson, Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne and Madonna all fans. Mich says her most memorable commissions were wedding cakes for Pierce Brosnan and Sir Paul McCartney, along with David Beckham’s 30th birthday cake. She is also the author of seven award-winning cookbooks, including *Everyday Bakes to Showstopper Cakes* and *Mich Turner’s Cake Masterclass*. For more information, visit lvcc.co.uk.

QUEEN ELIZABETH DATE CAKE

Makes 1 x 20cm/8in round cake Takes

“This is the go-to favourite cake in our house. I developed this recipe with the Queen in mind. It combines dates with apples, fresh lemon and ginger. The combination of brown sugars results in a rich caramelised flavour, which balances well with the acidity of the apples and lemon.”

INGREDIENTS

- 200g/7oz unsalted butter
- 135g/4½oz light muscovado brown sugar
- 135g (4½oz) dark muscovado sugar

- 250g/9oz Medjool dates (I use 12), each one stoned and roughly chopped into 4 pieces
- 100g/4oz sultanas
- 2 large eggs
- 250g/9oz self-raising flour
- 250g/9oz Bramley apples, peeled, cored and grated. (I tend to use 2 medium-large size apples. It is okay if it is just over 250g/9oz, this will just make the cake more moist, with more of a pudding texture.)
- Grated zest of 2 lemons
- 2.5cm/1 in piece of ginger, peeled and grated

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C, 325°F, Gas 3 and line the base and sides of a 20cm/8in round tin with non-stick baking parchment.
2. Put the butter and sugars in a large saucepan and heat over a medium heat until melted. Stir in the chopped dates and sultanas and continue to heat over a low heat for about 10 minutes until the dates and sultanas soften. Remove the pan from the heat and leave to cool.
3. Stir the eggs into the cooled mixture and mix with a wooden spoon. Stir in the flour until well

4. This cake can be served warm with vanilla ice cream, crème fraîche or Greek-style yoghurt, or cooled with a cup of coffee. Store for up to 7 days in an airtight container at room temperature. Suitable for freezing.