

Marian Armitage's Valhalla Fruit Cake

This delicious cake uses dried figs and apricots as well as raisins and is a variation on a 'Huffsie' or 'Doofie' - a traditional fruit cake that was sometimes spread with butter. This version is a bit richer and more fruity - the fruit is soaked in 'Old Scatness' which is one of the lovely beers brewed by the Valhalla Brewery in Unst.

The wholesomeness of this cake is also increased by the use of some beremeal - a traditional and ancient 6-row barley which is now grown commercially in Orkney.

The butter comes from the Shetland Farm Dairies which supplies home produced milk whatever the weather and the eggs are from happy hens on Bressay!

Ingredients

200g butter - at room temperature
200g soft brown sugar
4 eggs
300g self-raising flour
100g beremeal
2 level teaspoons baking powder
2 level teaspoons cinnamon
1 large tablespoon (75g) marmalade
450g dried fruit: 100g apricots
 150g raisins
 150g figs
 50g dates
125ml Old Scatness Ale - if possible soak fruit overnight

Method

- Preheat the oven to 180°C and grease and line a large loaf tin: 26x10cm (you could also make this in a 20cm round cake tin)
- Sieve flour, beremeal, cinnamon and baking powder - on to a plate.
- Cream butter and sugar until soft and add eggs.
- Add soaked fruit and marmalade and mix really well.
- Add dry ingredients mix very well. A good spatula is best.
- Put into the lined tin and into the oven near the top.
- Make for 20 minutes at 180°C then reduce the heat to 150°C. The cake will need about 1-1½ hours. Cool in the tin and ideally keep for a day before eating.