

## WARM UP

1 Tick the foods you would expect to eat at Easter in the UK.

- custard tarts  
 eggs  
 fish  
 fruitcake  
 lamb  
 mince pies  
 pancakes  
 turkey

## EASTER FOOD: SIMNEL CAKE RECIPE

Easter Sunday marks Jesus Christ's Resurrection from death, according to Christian belief. The date changes each year, falling on or around the first full moon after the March equinox and after the 40 days of Lent, a period of reflection and spiritual preparation. Although less common nowadays, Lent is traditionally marked by fasting, both from food and festivities. So that no food was wasted, families would have a feast on Shrove Tuesday (the day before Lent commences), taking its name from the ritual of 'shriving', confessing your sins and asking for absolution. In addition to shriving, Christians would use up foods that would go off during Lent, hence the tradition of eating pancakes made of eggs, fat, milk and flour in the UK. During Easter, churches are filled with flowers and there are special hymns and songs, but not all Easter customs are Christian, some are pagan in origin. Eggs, bunnies and lambs are often associated with Easter because in Pagan times, they were signs of good luck and new life. Early Christians adopted this symbolism and much of it can still be seen on the Easter menu today.

**Eggs** are often served at breakfast or prepared as a snack or appetizer before a larger meal or party and children decorate egg shells and receive chocolate Easter eggs.



**Roast lamb** is the traditional meat for the main meal on Easter Day, served with mint sauce and vegetables.

The traditional Easter pudding is **custard tarts** sprinkled with currants and flat **Easter biscuits**, containing spices, currants and sometimes grated lemon rind.



**Simnel cake**, a rich fruitcake, is traditionally baked for tea. It is thought to have been first made by servant girls and maids to take home to their mothers on Mothering Sunday, but nowadays it is associated with Easter and is often decorated according to Christian tradition. Marzipan balls are placed on top of the cake to represent Christ's 12 disciples, minus Judas. Sometimes an extra marzipan ball or decoration is added to the middle of the cake to represent Christ. Today, of course, you're just as likely to buy a Simnel cake with chicks or rabbits on top!



## READING COMPREHENSION

2 **PET** Read the text about Easter foods and traditions and choose the correct answer for each question.

- 1 The celebration of Easter is...
  - A Buddhist.
  - B Christian.
  - C Jewish.
  - D Muslim.
- 2 Each year, Easter falls...
  - A at a different time.
  - B at the end of March.
  - C during Lent.
  - D in March.
- 3 Lent is a period...
  - A for fasting.
  - B of reflection.
  - C of 40 days.
  - D for all of these things.
- 4 Shrove Tuesday is...
  - A all of the following.
  - B the end of fasting.
  - C a day of repentance.
  - D during Lent.
- 5 The tradition of eggs, bunnies and lambs is...
  - A Christian and pagan.
  - B only Christian.
  - C only pagan.
  - D neither Christian nor pagan.
- 6 At Easter, eggs are...
  - A decorated.
  - B eaten.
  - C given to children.
  - D all of these things.
- 7 The following is not a typical Easter ingredient...
  - A beef.
  - B currants.
  - C lamb.
  - D mint.
- 8 Today, Simnel cake is still...
  - A a Mother's Day cake.
  - B decorated to represent Christ's betrayal.
  - C made entirely of marzipan.
  - D only pagan in its symbolism.

## 3 Complete this recipe for Simnel cake with the missing verbs.

add (x 2) • cream • glaze • place • preheat • put • remove • reserve • sift • smooth • spread • stir • test

## SIMNEL CAKE RECIPE



- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ 250 g sugar and 250 g ground almonds in a bowl.
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ 2 free-range beaten eggs and mix to a fairly soft consistency. Add 1 tsp almond essence and knead for one minute until the paste is smooth and pliable.
- Roll out a third of the almond paste to make a circle 18 cm in diameter.
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the remainder for the cake topping.
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ the oven to 140°C/gas mark 1. Grease and line a 18 cm cake tin.
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ 175 g butter and 175 g sugar together until pale and fluffy. Gradually beat in 3 free-range eggs until well incorporated.
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_ 175 g plain flour, a pinch salt and ½ tsp ground mixed spice a little at a time.
- (7) \_\_\_\_\_ 350 g mixed dried fruit, 55 g chopped mixed peel and ½ grated lemon zest and (8) \_\_\_\_\_ into the mixture.
- (9) \_\_\_\_\_ half the mixture into a greased and lined 18 cm cake tin. Smooth the top, (10) \_\_\_\_\_ with 1-2 tbsp apricot jam and cover with the circle of almond paste. Add the rest of the cake mixture and (11) \_\_\_\_\_ the top leaving a slight dip in the centre to allow for the cake to rise.
- (12) \_\_\_\_\_ with 1 free-range egg and bake in the preheated oven for 1 ¾ hours.
- (13) \_\_\_\_\_ by inserting a skewer in the middle - if it comes out clean, it is ready.
- (14) \_\_\_\_\_ from the oven and set aside to cool on a wire rack.

## WRITING

- 4 Write up your Easter Monday picnic menu and display it for your classmates to see. Decide which one you like best.