

## Twelfth Night Cake

Twelfth Night, 5 January, is the final day of the Christmas season and the day before Epiphany, the date on which the Church traditionally celebrates the arrival of the 'wise men from the East' who came to worship Jesus when he was born.

In the United Kingdom, two traditions have merged: The cake with its traditional frill around the outside was once a crown, and the bean is/was found in Christmas pudding (often as a sixpence piece until decimalisation). Nowadays, we eat both on Christmas Day, but in other countries such as France and Spain, a cake is baked for Twelfth Night, and a dried bean is hidden inside. The person who finds the bean in their slice is the king or queen for the evening and can direct any entertainments.

Twelfth Night is also considered to be the right day to take down festive decorations, although it is said that the late Queen Elizabeth would leave hers up until Candlemas (2 February), so the choice is yours!

125g soft butter  
125g caster sugar  
2 eggs (1 whole, 1 yolk)  
125g ground almonds  
15g plain flour  
2 tbsp rum  
375 g puff pastry (ready-made)  
1 egg white  
A little water  
Icing sugar  
A dried bean (or small coin wrapped in silver foil), if using

1. Cream together the butter and sugar
2. Add the whole egg and egg yolk, stir in the ground almonds, flour and rum
3. Chill the mixture in the refrigerator for 30 mins
4. Roll out the puff pastry and cut it into two 25cm circles
5. Place one circle on a baking sheet and brush the outside edge with water
6. Form the remaining pastry into a ball, then roll it out and cut into strips 1 cm wide
7. Lay the strips in a single layer around the base circle to form a border
8. Remove the almond mixture from the fridge and spoon the mixture into the centre of the base circle. Make a higher mound in the centre. If using the bean (coin) place it in the mixture now.
9. Brush the strips of pastry with water and place the second circle on top.
10. Press the edges down well to prevent the mixture from escaping.
11. Chill for an hour.
12. Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan) (200°C conventional/ gas mark 6)
13. Remove the cake from the fridge, make a small hole in the centre of the pastry.
14. Gently score lines to mark out the slice sizes without cutting through the pastry
15. Brush the top with beaten egg white.
16. Bake for 30 mins. Remove and dust with icing.
17. Bake again for 10 minutes until icing sugar has caramelised.

The cake can be eaten warm (which is particularly delicious) or cold.