

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Nicola's Gluten Free Dairy Free Crunchy-top Lemon Cake (Based on a Mary Berry recipe)

This recipe can be made in a 23cm round cake tin (a spring-form one is best), or in a roasting tin for very easy portioning at Sunday Teas. Your roasting tin should be approximately 30cm x 23cm, but a little larger or smaller either way doesn't matter. It's not the prettiest cake in the world, but it's certainly one of the tastiest! It can also be made with 'normal' flour – just leave out the Xanthan gum.

NOTE: Gluten-free baking relies on incorporating lots of air, and keeping it in there. It's very important that all your ingredients are room temperature. I always try to remember to take the margarine out the night before, and my eggs are never in the fridge. Warm the milk in a small pan or in the microwave just before using. TOP TIP: If you do forget to take the margarine out, warm for a few seconds in the microwave – but don't melt it! If you forget to take your eggs from the fridge, they can be also be gently warmed by placing in a bowl with some hot tap water and leaving for a few minutes. But whatever you do, don't use cold ingredients.

CAKE INGREDIENTS:

175g very soft margarine (I use Vitalite, it's dairy free)
225g golden caster sugar (white caster sugar is ok, I just like golden)
225g self-raising gluten-free flour (I used Doves Farm)
1½ tsp gluten-free baking powder (I use Dr Oetker)
¼ tsp Xanthan gum – not essential, but does help the cake hold together (I use Doves Farm)
3 large room temperature eggs
8 tbsp warm milk (use coconut or rice milk to make your cake completely dairy free)
Finely grated rind from 2 unwaxed (preferably organic) lemons

CRUNCHY TOPPING:

Juice of 2 lemons
Enough sugar (caster or granulated, but please use white sugar) to make a delicious lemony sludge. You'll need 115–175g . . . depends on how juicy your lemons are.

HOW TO MAKE:

The tins: Lightly grease your round tin, then base-line with parchment paper (Not greaseproof paper, it'll stick!), or grease and fully line your roasting tin (i.e. do the sides too – makes it easier to remove from the tin).

The oven: Pre-heat your oven to 180°C, or 160°C if using a fan oven.

Mixing: I use an electric stand-mixer with a balloon whisk as it's easy and gets lots of air into the mix, but just use what you have.

The method: Sift together your flour, baking powder and Xanthan gum (if using), and set aside.

In the mixer bowl, add your eggs and sugar. Set the mixer going, and whisk on high speed until very pale and doubled in size (4–5 minutes) Once light and fluffy, add in the flour mix, lemon zest, your very-soft margarine, and about 6 tbsp of the milk. Mix on low speed, just enough to incorporate, for about 30 seconds. Do not over mix . . . you'll end up with a tough cake!

Remove bowl from mixer, and scrape and mix in any stuck bits of flour from the sides and bottom with a silicon or rubber spatula. The consistency should be like softly whipped cream. If it's a bit stiff looking, add the rest of the milk and mix this in by hand. If you are unsure if the consistency is right, add the milk anyway!

Pour into your prepared tin, and level the top.

Pop the cake into the oven, clear up your mess, squeeze your lemons into a measuring jug, and measure out your sugar, but DON'T mix together at this point . . . then have a cup of coffee!

After 40 minutes, test the cake by gently pressing on the top. It should spring back and not wobble. If there is any wobble, give it another 5 minutes. Exact baking time will depend on what shape of tin you used, your oven, the mixture, etc . . . just keep testing.

Once ready, set the cake on a cooling rack. DON'T remove from the tin.

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Now mix together your lemon juice and sugar. It should look like an unappetizing gritty sludge. That's perfect! If you have a skewer, poke some holes in your cake. Don't worry if you don't have one, I'm not convinced it actually helps.

Spoon on your lemon topping. Take your time with this. Let it soak in. Make sure you get into every corner and curve. The sugary topping will run and build up at the edges, especially if your cake has risen more in the middle. But that's not a problem. The deliciously crunchy outside bits are the best bits!

For easy transportation to your chosen venue, leave in the tin until ready to slice and serve. Cut the round cakes into 12 very generous wedges. Or, you can get 16–18 more moderate portions from the roasting tin cake. Enjoy with a strong cup of coffee, and a blob of crème fraiche for the ultimate treat! ENJOY!



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Nicola Sinclair

Where I live: Bigton

My favourite book and why: *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex* by Owen Chase

Shetland has a long history of seamanship. Fisherman, merchant navy, whalers. This is the true account of a fight for survival, written by the first mate of the ill-fated Nantucket whaler, *Essex*. It was the book that inspired *Moby Dick*, and one which I read long before the release of the recent blockbuster movie *In the Heart of the Sea*. Yes, it concerns whaling. And that is something that may put folk off. But, whether you decide to root for the whale, or whether you decide to overlook the bloodshed and concentrate on the human story, on the hardship, and the bravery and strength of the men involved . . . just read it! Amazing, amazing book!

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Outi's Date Cake

This is a traditional Finnish cake that has for several years now been served at Sunday teas and the recipe has been shared in different parts of Shetland.

CAKE INGREDIENTS:

250g stoned dates
100ml water
250g soft butter
180g sugar
3 eggs
250g plain white flour
1 tsp baking powder

HOW TO MAKE:

Boil together the stoned dates and water into a puree, mixing well, and let cool.

Beat the soft butter and sugar together in a bowl.

Add the date puree into butter and sugar, mixing well. Then add the 3 eggs into the mix.

Mix the baking powder into the flour and add both to the mix.

Pour into a loaf tin or a ring-shaped savarin tin that has been either lined with baking paper or buttered and floured and bake at 175°C (or 160°C fan oven) for 1 hour.

If you are using gluten-free flour (which works well with this recipe), increase the amount of water to 150ml.



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Outi Kater

Where I live: Aith

My favourite book and why: My favourite book is *Wegener's Jigsaw* by Clare Dudman. It is a novel about Alfred Wegener, a real-life scientist who, in the first half of the twentieth century, was the first to come up with the theory of continental drift, only to be discredited by his contemporaries. It is a story of one man's love for science and unshakeable belief in an idea. Northern landscapes and ice play prominent roles in this story. I always find it fascinating how we human beings can have so vastly different interests and can get passionate about very different things. That is how the ever-advancing civilization is carried forward, and Alfred Wegener definitely gave his all for his cause.

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Karen's Rhubarb Cake

Rhubarb grows like mad in Shetland, so it's good to find recipes to use the stuff up! This cake works really well with the gluten-free flour, but you can just use ordinary flour if you like.

INGREDIENTS

150g soft margarine
150g caster sugar
215g gluten-free self-raising flour
½ tsp baking powder
3 eggs
Pinch salt
1 lemon – zest and juice
Approximately 575g rhubarb
50–75g brown sugar (use 50g sugar if your rhubarb is young and sweet, 75g if older and more bitter)
1 tsp ground cinnamon

HOW TO MAKE

Beat the margarine, caster sugar, flour, baking powder, salt and eggs together briefly

Then stir in the lemon juice and zest and a handful or two of rhubarb cut into small dice

Spread in tin lined with non stick paper – my tin is approximately 25cm x 25cm

Mix brown sugar and cinnamon – sprinkle half over the top of the cake mix

Cut the rest of the rhubarb into short (approximately 2cm) lengths and arrange in rows all over the cake surface

Sprinkle on the rest of the sugar/cinnamon mix

Bake at 190°C for approximately 45 minutes – till wooden skewer in middle comes out clean

Toffee Flapjacks

It can be intimidating to have to bring something to a Shetland Hall Tea if you're not a baker. Don't face the ignominy of trying to disguise shop-bought as home-made! Make these instead as they are very easy but most delicious. What makes these flapjacks toffee-ish is the dark brown sugar and, most importantly – use *jumbo*-rolled oats (from health food shops) instead of normal porridge oats.

INGREDIENTS

115g dark brown sugar
115g butter
1 slightly rounded tbsp golden syrup
175g jumbo-rolled oats

HOW TO MAKE

Heat butter, sugar and syrup gently until melted.

Stir in rolled oats.

Press into a Swiss Roll tin lined with non-stick baking paper (you can try just greasing the tin, but lining makes things so much easier).

Cook at approximately 190°C for about 10–15 minutes till it's all bubbling and going crispy round the edges.

Cool in tin then cut into bars (though if you didn't line the tin it would be wise to try getting them out before they're totally cold).

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Shetland Bannocks

There is no standard recipe for bannocks, so here's a couple of very different versions to play with. There is a kind of alchemy to them – some folk can bake them effortlessly; some of us might follow the same recipe but just don't have the 'knack'. In theory they are very simple and you can knock a few up anytime. Best eaten fresh (even better warm) with butter and you can add fillings as desired. Get them right and you will find you are more popular than the maker of the fanciest cakes!



BANNOCKS 1 – GRIDDLE-COOKED TRADITIONAL

INGREDIENTS

250g self-raising flour
1 rounded tsp baking powder
Large pinch salt
1 carton buttermilk (284ml)

HOW TO MAKE

Lightly grease a griddle or big heavy frying pan and put it on the cooker top to heat.

Sieve the dry ingredients into a bowl.

Add just enough buttermilk to make a soft dough.

Transfer to a floured board, divide into 2 balls and roll or flatten them fairly thin.

Cut each in half then into 3, so you have 6 triangular bannocks from each round.

Lay them on the hot griddle for approximately 2 minutes, turn when lightly brown and cook on the other side.

Cool them on a tea towel while you cook the other 6.

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BANNOCKS 2 – PETER SINCLAIR'S OVEN-COOKED* BANNOCKS

This one is used for classes by Shetland Islands Council's Adult Learning department and they highly recommend it.

INGREDIENTS

600g self-raising flour

50g margarine

25g caster sugar

1 carton buttermilk (284ml)

1 egg

Natural yoghurt – approximately 250–300g

HOW TO MAKE

Preheat oven to 160°C (fan oven) and flour a baking tray.

Combine flour and butter into a bowl and rub together with your fingertips until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs.

Add the sugar, buttermilk, egg and enough natural yoghurt to make a sticky dough.

Turn the dough out onto a floured board and knead, adding enough flour just until the dough is no longer sticky, but it is still light.

Using floured hands gently press the dough down to a thickness of 2.5cm.

Cut with a biscuit cutter and place slightly spread apart on the floured baking tray.

Bake for 12 minutes until well risen and golden on the top.

Transfer to a wire baking rack to cool.

*These can be cooked on the stove top if you prefer, simply press your dough out slightly thinner, cut and cook on both sides over a moderate heat until browned and well-risen.



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Karen Fraser

Where I live: Lerwick

My favourite book and why: Impossible to have one favourite book! I will go for *Full Tilt: Ireland to India with a Bicycle* by the great travel writer Dervla Murphy, because she is so intrepid. It is the tale of her cycle journey from Ireland to India in the 1960s.

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Catherine's Malteaser and Mars Bar Slice



INGREDIENTS:

200g of Malteasers plus extra to decorate (grab a 280g pack)
4 Mars Bars (4 x 53g bars)
125ml condensed milk
1 pack of Chocolate Digestive Biscuits (250g)
2 blocks of Cadbury Milk Chocolate (2 x 200g blocks)
100g unsalted butter
1 tsp vegetable oil

HOW TO MAKE:

Line the base and sides of a slice tin with baking paper.

Finely crush the Chocolate Digestive Biscuits. You can use a food processor or the end of a rolling pin if you are like me!

Roughly crush 200g of the Malteasers.

Dice the Mars Bars into small pieces.

In a small saucepan over a low heat, melt the butter and condensed milk, stirring until combined.

Add the roughly crushed Malteasers and Mars Bars to the crushed biscuits and stir through. Then add the melted butter and condensed milk and stir until combined – it will be very sticky!

Pour the mixture into the slice tin and flatten with the back of a metal spoon.



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Pop it in the fridge for approximately an hour until it has completely cooled.

Melt both of the blocks of chocolate and add 1 tsp of vegetable oil to the melted mixture, making sure you stir it in.

Pour the melted chocolate over the cooled slice and then decorate with remaining Maltesers.

Put the slice back into the fridge and cut into pieces before it has completely set.



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Catherine Jeromson, Senior Library Assistant

Where I live: Voe

My favourite book and why: One of my favourite books is *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak. It is such a powerful read – never before had I read something which evoked so much emotion. My husband was astonished that a mere book could make me cry! Unfortunately, like many of my other favourite reads, it has been made into a movie, and I often feel that spoils the magic and my enjoyment of the book.

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Louise's Chocolate-Chip Banana Cake

INGREDIENTS:

200g un-sifted plain flour
175g sugar
115g margarine
1 tbsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla essence
2 eggs
3 or more ripe bananas, mashed – the riper the better
1 (or 2) packets chocolate chips, both the same or mix and match

HOW TO MAKE:

Pre heat oven to 180°C (fan oven 160°C)

Mix the flour, baking powder, salt and chocolate chips together (stops the chocolate sinking to the bottom).

Beat the sugar, margarine and eggs together until light and fluffy then mix in the vanilla essence and the mashed bananas.

Stir in the flour mixture until no flour is visible – do not overmix.

Makes one 900g loaf or 2 x 450g loaves (cake tin liners very handy). Can also be thrown into mini loaf tins or muffin cases.

Pour into the loaf tin and sprinkle liberally with brown sugar.

Bake the 900g loaf for 50–60 minutes – it usually cracks across the top. Reduce baking time if using smaller tins.

Cool on a rack and remove from the tin after 10 minutes.



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Louise Arcus

Where I live: Lerwick

My favourite book and why: It's hard to choose just one book but I think I'll have to go with *It* by Stephen King as it is the book I have re-read more than any other. I've always been a fan of horror books and films, and Stephen King can do horror better than anyone. If you weren't afraid of clowns before reading it, you will be after!

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Julie's Paet Hill Rumbly Road

(Based on a Nigella Lawson recipe.)

INGREDIENTS:

125g soft butter
300g dark chocolate broken into pieces
3 tbsp syrup
200g rich tea biscuits
100g peerie mootie marshmallows
2 tsp icing sugar (for dusting)

HOW TO MAKE:

Melt the butter, chocolate and syrup in a heavy-based saucepan. Melt together on a low heat. Reserve 150g of this melted mixture and put to one side.

Put the biscuits into a freezer bag and then bash them with a rolling pin. It is good to have both crumbs and pieces of biscuits.

Fold the biscuit pieces and crumbs into the melted chocolate mixture in the saucepan, and then add the marshmallows.

Tip into a tray (24cm x 24cm) and flatten as best you can. Pour the reserved 150g of melted chocolate mixture over the marshmallow mixture.

Refrigerate for about 2 hours or overnight.

Cut into peerie pieces (you don't want them too big as they are quite rich) and dust with icing sugar.



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Julie Thomson

Where I live: Unst

My favourite book and why: I absolutely love *Pride and Prejudice*. What an amazing world to fall into. I read that famous first line and I was hooked – 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.' I adore every character and the ways in which they interact with each other. My favourite part is when Mr Collins proposes to Lizzy and she turns him down. The conversation she must then have with her parents is so funny and witty. I won't even get started on how much I fell in love with Mr Darcy!