



CLASSIC VICTORIA SPONGE WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS

serves 6 to 8

for the sponge

- 225g unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus extra for greasing
- 225g self-raising flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting
- 225g caster sugar
- 4 large eggs, preferably free-range or organic
- 1 lemon

for the filling

- 250g fresh strawberries
- 1 vanilla pod
- 150g good-quality strawberry jam
- 285ml double cream
- 2 heaped tablespoons caster sugar
- icing sugar, for dusting

To make your sponge

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4 • Grease the bottom and sides of two 20cm sandwich cake tins with butter • Line the base of each tin with greaseproof paper, then dust the sides lightly with flour • You can make your sponge like this (by hand), or in a food processor • Beat the butter and sugar together with a wooden spoon, until very light and fluffy • Add the eggs one at a time, beating each one in well before you add the next • Sift in the flour • Finely grate over the lemon zest then fold it into the mixture (halve the lemon and save it for later)

To bake your sponge

Divide the cake mix into the prepared tins and spread it out using a spatula • Bake in the hot oven for around 20 minutes, or until lightly golden brown and risen • You can check to see if the cake is cooked by sticking a cocktail stick or skewer right into the middle of the sponge • Remove it after 5 seconds and if it comes out clean the cake's cooked; if slightly sticky it needs a bit longer, so put it back into the oven • Allow the cakes to cool slightly in the tins, then carefully turn them out on to a rack to cool completely

To make your filling and finish the cake

Hull and slice your strawberries • Carefully score the vanilla pod lengthways and scrape out all of the seeds • Gently warm the jam in a pan over a low heat • Remove from the heat and stir in your sliced strawberries • Add the cream to a bowl with the sugar and vanilla seeds, and squeeze in the juice from your zested lemon • Whip until you have nice soft peaks • Pick the least attractive sponge to go on the bottom and put it in the middle of your serving platter or cake plate • If it's a little rounded on top, simply trim and flatten it off by using a sharp knife and rotating the plate and sponge as you cut • Smear over the jam and strawberries, then spread the sweetened cream over the top • Place the second cake, with the pretty side facing up, on top and dust it with icing sugar



