

Sarah & Duck Cake

Warning: it is physically impossible to make this cake without quacking like Duck throughout

Ingredients

For the sponges

- 8 large eggs
- 450g caster sugar
- 450g unsalted butter, room temperature (plus extra for greasing)
- 450g plain flour
- 5 tsp baking powder

For the filling

- 250g unsalted butter, room temperature
- 500g icing sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla paste
- 200g strawberry jam (no bits)

For the topping

- 1.5kg fondant icing
- 1 large egg white (or if you're nervous about using egg white for royal icing, use shop-bought royal icing)
- 400g icing sugar
- A few splashes of lemon juice
- Food colouring gels

Kit needed

- 23cm springform cake tin
- Baking parchment
- Square cake board, mine was 30cm²
- Electric hand whisk or electric stand mixer
- Small offset palette knife
- Small piping bags
- 2mm piping nozzle
- Rolling pin
- Cooling rack
- Cake cutting wire (optional but very useful)
- Cake smoother (optional but very useful)

Method

Sponges

1. This cake is made from two large sponges cut into two layers each, so there are four layers inside the cake. Make the sponge cakes one at a time with 4 large eggs, 225g unsalted butter, 225g caster sugar, 225g plain flour and 2½ tsp baking powder in each cake. You might want to make the sponges in advance, in which case wrap them well in cling film to prevent them drying out



2. Preheat the oven to 180°C / 160°C fan / gas mark 4. Take your springform cake tin, line with baking parchment and grease well
3. Put the butter and sugar into a bowl and beat with an electric hand whisk or in a stand mixer until light and creamy. Thoroughly beat in each egg, one by one. If the mixture starts to split, add 1 tbsp of the flour to bring it back
4. Sift in the rest of the flour and baking powder and fold them in. Be gentle but make sure the mixture is fully combined, including any flour at the bottom of the bowl. Put this into the cake tin, smooth the batter out with an offset palette knife and bake for 45-50 minutes
5. Check that the cake is cooked by poking a cocktail stick into the centre: if it comes out clean then it's cooked; if it's got cake mix on it, give the cake another few minutes before testing again. Take out of the oven and set on a wire rack. Once cool enough to touch, pop the cake out of the tin and return the sponge to the rack to fully cool. Repeat
6. When the cakes have cooled, use your cake cutting wire (or a sharp bread knife if you don't have a cutting wire) to level the tops of the sponges and to cut them through the middle to turn your two large sponges into four thinner layers



Filling

7. To make the buttercream, beat the butter in a large bowl with an electric hand whisk or in a stand mixer. Pour in the icing sugar, add the vanilla paste and mix slowly on the lowest setting on your mixer until completely incorporated
8. Take the first layer of cake and put onto your cake board. Spread a thin layer of buttercream onto the bottom cake and smooth with an offset spatula. Add a thin layer of jam (around 2tsp smoothed out) on top of the buttercream. Spread a thin layer of buttercream onto the bottom of the next cake layer and lay the next sponge on top of the cake
9. Repeat until it is a four layer sponge cake (sponge, buttercream, jam, buttercream, sponge, etc.). Coat the entire cake in a thin layer of buttercream and smooth with an offset palette knife



Topping

10. Using a small amount of green gel food colouring, colour 1kg of fondant to cover the cake. Roll this out to a circle of about 40cm diameter and use your rolling pin to carefully lift this onto the cake. Use a cake smoother (or your hands) to smooth the fondant onto and all around the cake. Cut the excess fondant from the base of the cake with a sharp knife

11. Colour small amounts of fondant icing with all the colours you will need and wrap each ball in cling film to prevent it from hardening or drying out
12. This is a really good template for any sort of character cake. Once you have an iced base, you can decorate with any kind of design you like – just do a Google image search for your favourite characters
13. For this cake, I used different shades of green fondant to make the hills around the bottom sides of the cake. Press them onto the cake with tiny dabs of water on the back of them to help them stick
14. Make up the royal icing for the trees and to edge Sarah & Duck by mixing around 400g icing sugar with one large egg white (or two chicks). If the royal icing needs loosening, add a splash of lemon juice
15. Divide the royal icing into four small bowls and colour in black, brown and to shades of green. Load a small piping bag fitted with a 2mm nozzle with the brown royal icing and pipe the tree trunks around the sides of the cake. Repeat with each shade of green to add the leaves to the trees
16. Cut Sarah & Duck out of pieces of fondant and arrange on the top of the cake. I hand-drew a design and cut each of the pieces out to use as a template. This is quite fiddly but it's a lot of fun
17. Load the black royal icing into a small piping bag fitted with a 2mm nozzle and pipe around the Sarah & Duck characters to finish
18. Give someone a very Happy Birthday!

