

# Patagonian black cake



One might take this to be just another rich, dark fruit cake, until it comes to the final stage of embalming it in a crisp casing of thin icing. What makes it unmistakably South American is the rum. This is a cake which can be made well ahead of times of celebration, and kept in cool conditions, maturing for months.

**Serves 15 | Prep 30 minutes | Cook 2 - 2½ hours**

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## Ingredients

250g butter  
200g muscovado sugar  
200g each of raisins, sultanas and currants  
150g mixed peel  
125g chopped nuts (walnuts or almonds)  
250g plain flour  
4 large eggs  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon mixed spice  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda mixed into 1 teaspoon vinegar and 1 tablespoon water  
150ml almond essence  
150ml rum

## Icing

175g icing sugar  
3 tablespoons hot water

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## Method

- 01** Put the dried fruit in a bowl and pour over the rum and marinate overnight. Grease and line a 20cm cake tin. Cream the butter and sugar, adding the lightly whisked eggs a little at a time, beating well.
- 02** Fold in the sieved flour and spices, the dried fruit and nuts.
- 03** Pour the liquid with the two raising agents (baking powder and bicarbonate of soda), together with the almond essence, onto the mixture and mix thoroughly.
- 04** Bake on the middle shelf of a moderate oven 150°C/Gas 3 for 2 - 2½ hours.

## Icing

- 01** Make a thin, glacé type icing using the icing sugar and the hot water.
- 02** Brush all over the cake – top, sides and bottom – to completely encase it in a brittle sugar shell. This is easier to do while the cake is still warm.