

Queen Cakes

These delightful little cakes are the precursor to the modern day cupcake. They started out when a thrifty housewife or “downstairs” cook, who, finding themselves with an excess of cake mixture at the end of the baking day, would pop the extra batter in a china teacup and bake it. These are the poor culinary cousin of the “Queen Cakes”, which were also baked individually, often in specially shaped pans so they came in a variety of shapes. Queen cakes boasted plump currants, rosewater, and almonds. This recipe is taken from the period cookbook by Eliza Acton and were very popular during the Regency era.

Ingredients

8 oz of self-rising flour

1/4 tsp ground mace

1 Tbsp of brandy

8 oz of unsalted butter

3 large eggs, beaten

1 Tbsp of rose water

4 1/2 oz of currants

1 lemon, zest grated (optional)

8 oz of caster sugar

1 3/4 oz of ground almonds

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper cups. Sift the flour and mace together into a large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs, brandy, and rosewater together. Melt the butter and allow it to cool slightly before adding it to the beaten egg mixture. Mix well. Make a well in the center of the flour and pour the melted butter and egg mixture in, mixing thoroughly. Add the currants, grated lemon zest if using, sugar, and ground almonds. Mix well, adding a little milk if the mixture is too stiff.

Place a heaped tablespoon of mixture into each paper cup, continue to stir the batter in the bowl as you scoop it out to avoid too much butter pooling at the bottom of the bowl. Do not overfill the muffin tin, because then the cakes will fall. Bake for 15-20 minutes, until well risen and golden brown.

Let the cakes cool for 5 minutes before taking them out of the tin. Place on a wire rack to cool.