Sri Lankan Christmas Cake

aka Sri Lankan Rich Fruit Cake
aka Sri Lankan Wedding Cake
aka Jehan's favourite Christmas base Sri Lankan sweet (there are many)

Co-founder and our VP of Growth & Strategy

Note to reader: This recipe has been modified by a committee of Jehan's Sri Lankan relatives to protect top secret family ingredients. This group of relatives monitors, licences and polices all Sri Lankan cake activity (caketivity) in the family. They are Jehan's first, last, and only line of defence. They live in secret, they exist in shadow… Wait, I'm now quoting Men In Black. Let's get to the recipe.

PS: Thank you to Aunty Padmini for this recipe - check out her Youtube channel for more Sri Lankan classics.

Ingredients

300 grams caster sugar

250 grams butter at room temperature

250 grams semolina

2 teaspoon mixed spices powder (cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg)

6 eggs yolks, separated from whites

3 egg whites beaten into a stiff froth

250 grams raisins

250 grams sultanas

150 grams cherries

100 grams candied peel

50 grams currants

150 grams cashew nuts

1 bottle ginger preserve (contents are 250 grams with syrup)

1 bottle chow-chow fruit preserve (contents are 250 grams with syrup)

1 bottle pumpkin preserve (contents are 250 grams with syrup)
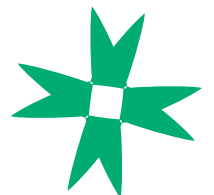
¼ cup strawberry jam

¼ cup golden syrup or honey

1 bottle vanilla (100ml)

1 bottle rose essence (100ml)

1 bottle almond essence (100ml)

100ml brandy

Directions

1. Chop all the fruits into little cubes.

2. Soak the chopped fruits in golden syrup or honey, jam and the syrup from the preserves.

3. Add brandy, vanilla, rose and almond essence. Mix well and place in a glass bowl with a lid or in an airtight container for a day or two, the longer the better.

4. Night prior to making the rich cake, roast the semolina for five minutes on a low fire.

5. Mix the butter with roasted semolina and mix well and let it cool. Sprinkle the mixed spices. Cover and leave for at least six hours or overnight.

6. Chop the cashew nuts and store them in a separate container.

7. Beat the three egg whites to a stiff froth and sprinkle half a teaspoon of sugar and beat for a few seconds, maintaining its stiff consistency like a meringue.

8. In a separate bowl, add six egg yolks and caster sugar. Beat with a stand mixer, until light and creamy and bubbles appear.

9. Fold in the semolina mixture with a wooden spoon and mix the soaked fruits and egg meringue alternatively.

10. Add the chopped cashew nuts and mix well.

11. Line a 12 x 10 inch tray with two to three layers of newspaper or brown paper and two layers of greaseproof or wax paper.

12. Pour the fruit cake mixture into the prepared tin and cover the cake with cardboard so the top does not get burnt.

13. Bake in slow oven (~160°C or ~300°F) for 2.5 to 3 hours.

14. Place a skewer into the cake to check if it is cooked. The skewer should come out clean when the cake is done.

15. Remove from the oven and let it cool.
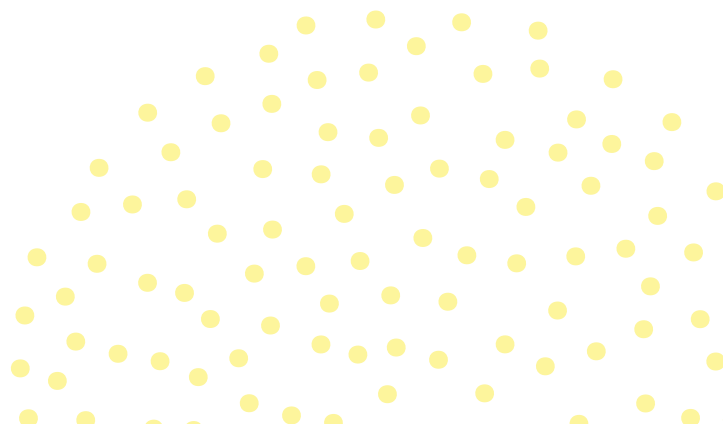
If you want the respect of the Sri Lankan cake community (which I think you do), you'll need to add icing to this cake:

Sri Lankan Almond Icing

Ingredients

500 grams icing sugar (plus extra 250 grams for kneading)
250 grams almond meal or finely ground cashew nuts
1 tablespoon glycerin
1 bottle almond essence
½ bottle rose essence
1 egg white
2 tablespoons strawberry jam or honey (to spread over cake)

Directions

1. Use a dough hook and blend all the ingredients (except jam or honey) well for two minutes.

2. Sprinkle icing sugar on a tabletop or board. Knead by hand until the dough is not sticky.

3. Place the rich cake on another board or alongside the almond icing.

4. Brush the top of the cake with strawberry jam or honey.

5. Roll out almond icing to 1–2mm thickness.

6. Cut a square or rectangle shape to the size of the cake.

7. Lift the almond icing with a spatula by passing a spatula under the rolled icing. Place the icing sheet over the rolling pin and gently place it over the cake.

8. Lightly roll over so the icing sticks on the cake.