

- Prep Time: 30 minutes (plus overnight fruit soaking)
- Bake Time: 2 hours 15 minutes to 2 hours 30 minutes
- Resting / Cooling Time: 4 hours (minimum)
- Total Active & Passive Time: ~3 hours (excluding soaking)
- Yield: 1 large 9-inch round cake (approx. 12-16 servings)
- Cooking Intensity: Medium (Requires careful temperature control and fruit preparation)

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Ingredients

For the Dried Fruit & Nut Mixture:

- Mixed Dried Fruits: 450g (1 lb) combination of raisins, sultanas, dried currants, and chopped dried figs or dates

- Candied Peel & Cherries: 150g (1 cup) glace cherries (halved) and 75g (1/2 cup) candied citrus peel
- Nuts: 100g (1 cup) chopped pecans, walnuts, or blanched almonds
- Soaking Liquid: 150ml (2/3 cup) orange juice, apple cider, or classic dark rum/brandy for traditional soaking

For the Cake Batter:

- Unsalted Butter: 225g (1 cup / 2 sticks), softened at room temperature
- Dark Brown Sugar: 200g (1 cup, packed)
- Large Eggs: 4, room temperature
- All-Purpose Flour: 250g (2 cups)
- Baking Powder: 1 tsp
- Salt: 1/2 tsp
- Spices:
 - 1 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
 - 1 tsp ground nutmeg
 - 1/2 tsp ground cloves
 - 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- Molasses or Black Treacle: 2 tbsp (for deep color and moisture)
- Zest: Fresh zest of 1 orange and 1 lemon

Cooking Intensity & Technique Breakdown

Baking a traditional fruit cake requires patience and consistency rather than complex technical maneuvers. Here is a breakdown of the heat intensity levels used throughout the process:

- **Fruit Soaking (Ambient Temperature):** Allows dried fruit to fully plump up and absorb maximum moisture before baking, preventing the fruit from drawing moisture away from the cake batter.
- **Batter Emulsification (Room Temperature Preparation):** Ensures smooth integration of dark brown sugar, butter, and eggs without splitting or curdling.
- **Low & Slow Baking (Low Intensity - 300°F / 150°C):** Low heat guarantees that the heavy batter bakes evenly to the center without burning the high-sugar fruits on the outside.

Step-by-Step Baking Instructions

Step 1: Soaking the Fruit (Overnight)

1. In a large non-reactive bowl, combine the raisins, sultanas, currants, candied cherries, and candied peel.
2. Pour your choice of fruit juice or spirit over the mixed fruit.
3. Stir thoroughly, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and let it stand at room temperature for at least 12 hours (preferably 24 hours), stirring once or twice to ensure even absorption.

Step 2: Preparing the Oven & Pan

1. Preheat your oven to 300°F (150°C / Gas Mark 2) with the middle rack positioned centrally.
2. Grease a deep 9-inch (23cm) round cake tin with butter. Line both the bottom and sides with a double layer of parchment paper, extending about 1 inch above the rim. (*The*

double layer protects the high-sugar exterior from scorching during the long bake).

Step 3: Mixing the Dry Ingredients

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, baking powder, salt, ground cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and ginger.
2. Toss 2 tablespoons of this flour mixture into the soaked fruit bowl and mix well.
(Coatings of flour prevent the heavy fruit from sinking to the bottom of the tin).

Step 4: Creaming and Batter Assembly

1. In a large mixing bowl or stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the softened butter and dark brown sugar together on medium speed for 3 to 4 minutes until light and fluffy.
2. Add the orange zest, lemon zest, and molasses (or treacle), mixing until smooth.
3. Beat in the eggs one at a time, adding a tablespoon of the dry flour mixture with each egg to prevent the mixture from splitting.
4. Gently fold in the remaining flour mixture using a spatula until just combined.
5. Fold in the flour-coated soaked fruit and chopped nuts until evenly distributed throughout the dense batter.

Step 5: Baking the Cake

1. Spoon the heavy batter into the prepared pan, smoothing the top with a spatula. Lightly hollow out the center slightly so the cake bakes flat rather than domed.
2. Place in the preheated oven and bake for 2 hours 15 minutes to 2 hours 30 minutes.
3. Check at the 1 hour 45 minute mark: if the top is darkening too quickly, loosely tent a

sheet of foil over the top of the pan.

4. The cake is done when a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs (no wet batter).

Step 6: Cooling & Resting

1. Remove the cake from the oven and set the pan on a wire cooling rack.
2. Optional: Poke small holes across the top with a skewer and brush with 2 tablespoons of warm fruit juice or spirit.
3. Allow the cake to cool completely in the pan for at least 4 hours (or overnight) before removing the parchment paper.

Storing, Ageing, and Feeding

Traditional fruit cake is unique because it improves over time as the spices and fruits mature.

- **Short-Term Storage:** Wrap the cooled cake tightly in parchment paper followed by a layer of aluminum foil. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place for up to 4 weeks.
- **Long-Term Storage (Ageing):** If using alcohol or high-sugar fruit syrups, brush the top of the cake with 1 tablespoon of liquid every 1-2 weeks for up to 3 months.
- **Freezing:** Wrap the un-iced cake tightly in plastic wrap and aluminum foil, then freeze for up to 6 months. Thaw slowly at room temperature before serving.

Nutritional Information

(Calculated per serving based on 16 equal slices)

- **Calories:** 380 kcal

- Total Fat: 15g
 - Saturated Fat: 7g
 - Trans Fat: 0g
- Cholesterol: 65mg
- Sodium: 140mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 58g
 - Dietary Fiber: 4g
 - Total Sugars: 38g
- Protein: 5g
- Vitamin D: 0.3mcg
- Calcium: 55mg
- Iron: 2.1mg
- Potassium: 310mg