

VICTORIA SPONGE

SERVES 8–10 / PREP 30 minutes / BAKE 25–30 minutes

Victoria sponge is an all-time British classic and although I know it isn't traditional to put cream in the middle, I love it. You can, of course, simply ignore the whipped cream suggestion and just sandwich the sponge layers together with jam. I find the all-in-one mixing method, which avoids the separate creaming, beating and folding-in stages, works very well.

230g plain flour

4 tsp baking powder

Pinch of salt

230g caster sugar

230g unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for greasing

4 medium eggs

To finish

150ml whipping cream

100g raspberry jam, or more if you like

Icing or caster sugar for dusting

1. Heat your oven to 180° C. Line the base of two 20cm cake tins with baking parchment and lightly butter the sides.
2. Put the flour, baking powder, salt, sugar, softened butter and eggs into an electric mixer or large bowl. Mix on a low speed, or whisk slowly using an electric hand-held whisk, until all the ingredients are evenly combined; do not overmix as this will tighten the mixture and result in a rubbery texture.
3. Divide the mixture evenly between the prepared cake tins and bake for 25–30 minutes until golden and slightly shrunk from the sides of the tin. Leave the sponges to cool slightly in the tins for about 5 minutes, then transfer from the tins to a wire rack to cool.
4. To assemble, keep the best-looking sponge for the top. Lay the other one, top side down, on a serving plate. Whip the cream until it holds soft peaks. Spread the bottom layer with the raspberry jam, then cover with the whipped cream. Place the other layer of sponge on top. Dust with icing or caster sugar and serve.