

No Mere Trifle

Gizzi Erskine updates a Seventies classic for the festive season

CLEMENTINE AND GINGER TRIFLE

Here is my take on a classic, with an old-school clementine jelly and a classic ginger cake, made boozy with ginger liqueur and thick custard, cream, glacé cherries and chocolate.

METHOD

Preheat oven to 180C°/160°C fan. Butter and line a 30x20cm roasting tin. Melt the butter, sugar and treacle in a pan, leave to cool for ten minutes, then stir in the eggs and milk. Sift the flour, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and bicarbonate of soda together in a large bowl, then fold in the butter mixture to form a batter. Pour into the prepared tin and bake for 45 minutes, or until the cake is risen and firm. Leave to cool and store in an airtight container until needed. You will have made too much cake, but this is no disaster – it freezes brilliantly.

To make the jelly, put the water, sugar and clementine juice into a small saucepan. Soak the gelatine leaves in cold water for ten minutes, then squeeze out any water and add to the clementine juice to dissolve. Arrange the clementine segments in the bottom of your trifle bowl, pour over the liquid and refrigerate for at least four hours, to set.

Now you're ready to construct the trifle. Chop up 150g of the cake and place on top of the jelly. Pour over the ginger liqueur. Pour over the custard and level out the top. Whisk the cream with the icing sugar until it's gently holding its shape, then spoon over the custard. Grate over the chocolate and finish with glacé cherries if you like. Pop the trifle into the fridge to chill for one hour before eating.

Gizzi's Season's Eatings by Gizzi Erskine is published by Mitchell Beazley, £25



INGREDIENTS

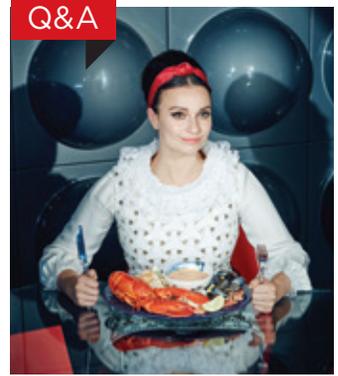
- » 100ml ginger liqueur
- » 600ml fresh custard
- » 300ml double cream
- » 1 teaspoon icing sugar
- » 50g good quality dark chocolate
- » A few glacé cherries, chopped

For the ginger cake

- » 225g unsalted butter, plus extra for buttering the tin
- » 225g dark brown sugar
- » 225g black treacle
- » 2 free-range eggs, beaten
- » 290ml milk
- » 340g plain flour
- » 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- » 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- » A small, fresh grating of nutmeg
- » 2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda

For the clementine jelly

- » 150ml water
- » 50g caster sugar
- » 300ml clementine juice
- » 4 gelatine leaves
- » 3 clementines, segmented



GIZZI ERSKINE

BRITISH TV CHEF

The first dish I invested time in was spaghetti bolognese. I do a really classic version using veal and pork mince, chicken livers and pancetta, and cook it down in milk. I put loads of garlic in though, sacrilegious, I know. I make my own fresh passata and add white wine.

Christmas dinner would be my death-row meal. Turkey, pigs in blankets, stuffing, roast potatoes, all of the sides, the best gravy. My family calls me the Christmas fairy.

I would love to invite Aleister Crowley round for Christmas dinner. Obviously he's known for the debauched stuff, but I believe he was quite a progressive thinker. Chef-wise, I'd have Anthony Bourdain and Alice Waters, who is one of my heroes, and Margot Henderson, because she's a hoot, with Fergus, of course. I'd invite Wanda Jackson to sing at the end and bring Elvis back to life too.

Whatever you do, make sure your pan is really hot, it's really important, especially when browning meat because it's where you're going to get that caramelisation from. You have to get it roasty roasty hot, almost to the point of smoking.

My secret weapon is garlic, which sounds kind of boring, but I think you can change the whole body of a dish by putting more into it. I've got a trio of garlic, acidity and sugar – which a lot of people don't use. Add half a teaspoon of sugar to a tomato sauce to completely round it off.

I've got three fridges but in my home-use fridge at the moment I've got miso, buttermilk, ricotta, leeks, goat's cheese, lots of courgette flowers, broad beans, eggs, lots of herbs, vine leaves... I'm quite impressed with myself.

The one thing I hate is mangetout. They're the most pointless vegetable. They taste wiggly and slimy. They're too irony, and taste really acrid and bitter. If you served me mangetout as a side dish I'd think you had thrown me back into the Seventies. I'll eat them but they serve no purpose.

I go to Padstow every year for the Christmas Festival. I always go to Rick Stein's for Singapore crab, it's one of my favourite meals of the year – apart from Christmas, of course.