

Perfect Sponge Sandwich

Serves 6



EQUIPMENT

scales or measuring cups and measuring spoons, standmixer with whisk attachment, spatula, slotted spoon, 2 x 20cm (8in) cake pans, scissors, cooling rack

INGREDIENTS

135g (4½oz/1 cup) plain (all-purpose) flour
 2 tablespoons cornflour (cornstarch)
 1½ teaspoons baking powder
 4 at room temperature, large eggs
 ¾ cup caster (superfine) sugar
 3 tablespoons boiling water
 1 teaspoon butter
 your favourite jam, to serve
 sweetened thickened cream, to serve

METHOD

Measure the ingredients perfectly. Arrange the oven shelves (bake a sponge on the lower middle shelf).

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F) (fan off preferably or 160°C (320°F) if fan forced).

Combine the flours in a small bowl and, using a little whisk, combine well, set aside (I am a lazy cook and NOT a fan of sifting, this little cheating method works well).

Place the eggs and sugar into a mixing bowl on your standmixer. Turn to high speed (10) and whisk at least 8 minutes until very thick and creamy (the mixture will fall back on itself and hold its shape if tested; this is called forming a ribbon).

Just before the eggs and sugar are ready, stir the butter into the boiling water. Turn off the mixer and remove bowl from mixer. Shower/scatter in the flour mixture lightly and pour the boiling water down the side of the bowl (remember to work quickly).

Using a large metal spoon fold the mixture together. Cutting the edge of the spoon through the creamy mixture, combining it (do not overmix and be gentle with the mixture).

Divide the mixture evenly between the pans (I weigh each pan on a set of scales).

Put the two tins quickly into the oven, side by side and quietly shut the door (no dawdling and mucking around! Work quickly. Many believe slamming the door lets out too much air and sponge will sink)

Set the timer and bake 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and let stand for 3 minutes before turning out of the pans onto cooling racks. Remove the paper from the base and allow to cool (don't turn out too quickly as if the sponges are too hot, they will stick to the cake rack).

When completely cool, spread one cake with your favourite jam, top with a dollop of whipped cream and gently spread out to the sides. Top with fresh berries if desired and carefully place the other cake on top.

Dust with icing sugar to serve and it's perfect!

Feather-light and soft. The most delicious simple cake filled with your favourite jam and slightly sweetened cream. Heaven!

What went wrong

- Not weighing ingredients properly (the ratio of eggs to sugar to flour is very important).
- Buttering tins very well (yes I prefer to use butter, I keep the wrappers from the butter just for this job)
- The incorrect tins (and make sure they are perfectly washed and dried).
- Line the base only with circle of baking paper, not the sides for a sponge (the outside edge will be removed when you remove the baking paper).
- Overmixing—this will remove the precious air you have whisked in and give you a dry, sunken cake.
- Uneven amounts placed in tins (I weigh them to make sure they are even!)
- Under- or overbaking—removing the sponge cake from the oven before it is firm means you will have gooey spots.

