

STRAWBERRY FRASIER CAKE



FUNNY IS POWER

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A massive thank you to Laura Adlington for providing us with these recipes. You can find more at lauraadlington.com

This beautifully light sponge cake shows off the very best of British strawberries and cream. If you're looking for something classic, elegant and delicious, this is a cake you'll love.

It takes a little time to make, but don't be put off. The combination of light genoise sponge, decadent crème diplomat and sweet strawberries is a treat well worth the effort. You can even assemble your fraiser cake the day before, if you'd like to get ahead.

Equipment and ingredients

- ▶ 2 x 8 inch cake tins
- ▶ 8 inch spring form tin (or cake ring)
- ▶ Acetate cake collar (optional)

For the genoise sponges

- ▶ 160g eggs (roughly 3 eggs)
- ▶ 90g caster sugar
- ▶ 90g plain flour
- ▶ Pinch salt
- ▶ 1 tsp vanilla paste
- ▶ 20g butter, plus extra for greasing

For the crème diplomat

- ▶ 4 egg yolks
- ▶ 35g corn flour
- ▶ 30g caster sugar
- ▶ 500ml whole milk
- ▶ 1 tsp vanilla bean paste
- ▶ 250ml whipping or heavy cream
- ▶ 2 tsp gelatin powder (or 3 sheets gelatin leaf)

For the cake filling

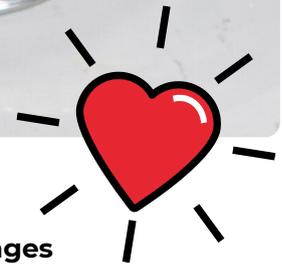
- ▶ About 450g fresh strawberries

For the sugar syrup

- ▶ 40g caster sugar
- ▶ 30g water

To decorate

- ▶ Icing sugar
- ▶ Handful of fresh fruit (strawberries, raspberries and blueberries work well)



Method

To make the genoise sponges

1. Pre-heat your oven to 160°C fan/350°F/Gas 4.
2. Grease two 8 inch cake tins with a generous amount of butter.
3. Melt 20g butter in the microwave and leave to one side.
4. Add the eggs, caster sugar, vanilla bean paste and salt to a stand mixer (or a large bowl if you're using an electric whisk). Beat on high for about 5-7 minutes, until the mixture is four times its original size.
5. Gently fold in the flour. Be careful – you don't want to knock the air out!
6. Fold in the melted butter until fully combined, still taking care not to knock the air out of the batter.
7. Divide the mixture into both cake tins (weighing them helps if you want to be precise). Level them off with a spatula then bake for 10-12 minutes – or until a skewer comes out clean.



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While the sponges are cooking, make the crème diplomat

1. Add your gelatin (either powder or leaf) to a small bowl of cold water to allow it to bloom.
2. To a medium-sized pan, add the milk and vanilla bean paste. Warm the milk and vanilla on a medium heat so the milk just simmers, not boils.
3. While the milk is warming up, combine the egg yolks, sugar and corn flour in a small bowl. Whisk until you form a smooth paste.
4. When the milk is simmering, add a small splash of it to the egg yolk mixture and combine, then add a little more. Then tip everything back into the pan and whisk continuously on a medium heat until the custard thickens.
5. Once it's lovely and thick, take it off the heat and leave to cool at room temperature. If it's looking a bit lumpy, pass it through a sieve.
6. After a few minutes, add the gelatin and stir thoroughly until combined. Pop some cling film directly on the top of the custard so it doesn't form a skin, then leave to cool completely.
7. Once the custard is at room temperature, whisk the cream to stiff peaks in a separate bowl.
8. Bit by bit, add the cream to the custard (or the other way round) in three stages until it's all combined. Try not to mix it too much. Leave it in the fridge until you're ready to use it.

To make the syrup

Add the sugar and water to a small pan. Simmer on a medium-high heat until the sugar has completely dissolved. Allow to cool for a couple of minutes before brushing it onto your sponge. A pastry brush is best for this, but you can just drizzle it on with a spoon if you don't have one.

To assemble the cake

1. Place your cake ring or spring form tin on a flat plate or cake stand, then add a ring of acetate (if using) to the inside.
2. Cut the stalks off a handful of strawberries and then slice the strawberries in half.
3. Place one of the sponge layers at the bottom, then coat the top of the sponge in the sugar syrup.
4. Arrange the strawberry halves around the outside of the sponge, with the flat surface directly touching the acetate or cake ring.
5. Place whole strawberries all around the rest of the inside of the cake, then cover with the crème diplomat, smoothing it off with a spatula.
6. Finally, add the last layer of sponge and brush this with the sugar syrup again. For a neater finish, I place the top cake layer upside down.
7. Cover the cake with cling film and pop it in the fridge for at least four hours until fully set. It can be stored in the fridge for up to two days.
8. Serve straight from the fridge when you're ready, and finish with a dusting of icing sugar and some more fresh fruit on top.