

✧ MAKES 28 ✧

## CHRISTMAS CAKE BITES

This recipe was thought up by Lucy, my assistant. Quick to prepare and easy to share – make in a traybake, cut into squares and it is perfect for a small tea or as a canapé.

175g (6 oz) apricots, chopped  
3 tablespoons brandy  
175g (6 oz) butter, softened  
175g (6 oz) light brown sugar  
4 eggs, beaten  
175g (6 oz) plain flour  
225g (8 oz) raisins  
225g (8 oz) currants  
225g (8 oz) cherries, quartered,  
washed and dried

### TO FINISH AND DECORATE

a little apricot jam, warmed  
500g (1 lb 2 oz) packet  
ready-prepared almond  
paste (Golden Marzipan)  
500g (1 lb 2 oz) packet  
ready-to-roll white icing

**AGA** Bake on the lowest set of runners in the Roasting Oven, with the cold sheet on the second set of runners for about 10 minutes. Transfer to the Simmering Oven for 2 hours or until a skewer comes out clean.

Preheat the oven to 160°C/Fan 140°/Gas 3. Grease and line a 30 × 20cm (12 × 8 in) traybake tin with non-stick baking paper.

**STEP 1** Measure the apricots into a small bowl, pour over the brandy and leave to soak overnight or until all of the brandy is absorbed.

**STEP 2** Cream the butter and sugar together using an electric hand whisk until smooth. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and level the top.

**STEP 3** Bake for 1–1¼ hours until golden brown. Insert a skewer to test – if it comes out clean the cake is cooked. Set aside to cool.

**STEP 4** Brush the top of the cake with apricot jam and then roll out a rectangle of marzipan the same size as the top of the cake. Lay this on top of the cake, and then brush the marzipan with a little more jam. Roll out a rectangle of icing the same size as the cake, and then cover the marzipan with the icing.

**STEP 5** Slice into squares and serve with a cup of tea.

**PREPARING AHEAD** The cake can be made, covered and iced up to 2 days ahead. The cake also freezes well without marzipan or icing.

**TIP** You can cut the squares as small as you like. If you are serving this as a sweet canapé, try cutting into 50.