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AUSTRALIAN CAKE RECIPES

AS a sequel to the Australian recipes for cold desserts and salads which I gave you recently, here are some Australian recipes for cakes and biscuits.

Orange Sponge Cake

This is a real sponge-cake, made without any rising agent, or any fat. Six eggs; grated yellow rind of 2 oranges; 10oz. castor sugar; 6oz. thrice-sifted flour; pinch of salt; 1 teaspoon lemon juice or a little less essence of lemon. Separate yolks and whites of eggs. Beat yolks for a minute or two, then add sugar by degrees and beat until thick and pale lemon coloured. Now add the grated orange rind and lemon juice or essence. Beat again. Whisk whites of egg to a light froth. Add salt and whisk until the basin can be turned upside down and egg whites remain in place. Gently combine sugared yolks and whites. Whisk together until very light and you see big bubbles begin to break on the mixture. Don't overbeat a sponge such as this or it can be spoilt. The moment big bubbles are seen to break on the surface, stop beating. Now begin to add the thrice-sifted flour—a very little at a time, sifting it over the creamy surface and working it in with gentle circular movements with the tip of the spoon, barely disturbing the surface texture. Occasionally run the spoon down through the mixture to ensure the flour is being absorbed evenly. Grease a deep cake tin and dust it out with equal parts of flour and castor sugar, or just flour alone. Shake out any excess. Pour mixture in gently. Tie a greased and floured band of double paper around outside of tin to extend from the centre to about 2 inches above rim. Bake in a really moderate oven about 1 1/4 hours, covering top with a greased paper should it tint too early. Some country cooks bake this type of sponge in a tin billy seven inches in diameter by 7 inches deep. Grease and flour the billy, but don't use sugar to dust it. Put lid on firmly. Set billy low in the oven and keep temperature strictly moderate, or the top heat can cause the lid to get so hot that it burns the top of the delicate sponge mixture. Cook as usual from 1 to 1 1/4 hours. Turn out with special care, as it is extra soft and light. This cake has a typical rounded top when billy-baked. Many country cooks also weigh the ingredients for this cake by eggs instead of ounces. The average egg weighs about 2oz., so the ingredients would therefore be 6 eggs; the weight of 5 eggs in sugar and the weight of 3 eggs in flour.

Australian Chocolate Cake

This cake has a delicious flavour and is mixed in an original way. Four ounces of butter or cod-fat, 2 generous tablespoons of cocoa; 1 teacup of sugar; 1 small teaspoon vanilla essence; 2 eggs; 1/2 teacup milk and a breakfast cup (6oz.) of flour; 1 teaspoon baking powder. Put butter and cocoa in a two-pint enamel basin. Stand over simmering

water until butter is melted. Add sugar and vanilla. Stir well, and stand in cold water until mixture is cold and begins to thicken. Then beat it up and add the lightly whisked eggs. It will begin to look like chocolate-cream. Now add the twice-sifted flour and baking powder and milk alternately, beating all thoroughly. Turn into an evenly greased tin (3-inch deep tin) with a single layer of greased paper in the bottom and a band of greased paper tied around outside of tin to come 1 inch above rim. Bake 40 to 60 minutes in a moderate oven. Too great heat will ruin this mixture. When cold slice through centre and spread with a soft chocolate filling. Ice with the same chocolate mixture if desired. For the filling rub a good teaspoonful of butter or margarine into a breakfast-cup of sieved icing sugar. Add 2 tablespoons cocoa. Mix gradually to a creamy thick consistency with black coffee. The flavour of mixed coffee-chocolate is excellent.

Victoria Sandwich Cake

This sponge mixture is familiar to cooks all over Australia. It usually has a raspberry jam or jam and cream filling, while the top is left plain or is lightly dusted with sugar. For a change it can be filled with lemon butter or mock cream flavoured with passion fruit. It can be made with self-raising flour, with plain flour and baking powder, or with plain flour used with cream of tartar (1 level teaspoon) and bicarbonate of soda (1/2 level teaspoon). Four eggs; pinch salt; 3/4 breakfastcup of sugar; 1 breakfastcup of plain flour (level unsifted measure), 1 level teaspoon of baking powder; 1 teaspoon of butter melted in 1 tablespoon of boiling water. (If only 3 eggs are used, increase the boiling water to 3 tablespoons.) The baking is most important, so heat the oven first to about 375 degrees F. (regulo 5) and then reduce the temperature to 350 degrees (regulo 4) so that you get a nice quiet steady heat before you put the cake in to bake. During baking the heat can be reduced again to about 325 degrees (regulo 3). These sponges must not be hurried or they toughen. Sift the flour, add the baking powder and sift together twice. Separate the yolks and whites of the eggs. Put the yolks in a little basin and the whites in a deep roomy bowl. Whisk the whites with the salt until stiff enough for the basin to be turned upside down without the whites falling out. Then add the sugar in three separate parts, beating very well between each so that the egg white keeps its shape all the time. Now whisk the egg yolks for a minute or two. Slowly add them to the fluffy white and beat together until light. Now sift the flour little by little over the fluffy surface and mix in very lightly with a fork, using a surface movement, and gradually blending it through the eggs. Lastly, drip in the hot water and butter. Fold gently through the mixture. Turn at once into two tins (7 inches diameter by 3 inches deep), which have been evenly greased and then dusted out with plain

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