

### Cakes Sink

Dear Aunt Daisy,

No matter how careful I am in the preparation and cooking of Christmas cakes, they always sink in the centre. I use the general recipe of ½ lb. butter, ½ lb. brown sugar, 4 eggs, 1 dessertspoon golden syrup, 10 oz. flour, 1 teaspoon baking soda, fruit, brandy, essences, etc. I put it in at 300 degrees (electric), second shelf from the bottom, bake 3 hours, and never open the oven door until after 2 hours. I also make fruit hot and when I pour this mixture into the tin, I do not make a hole in the centre of the mixture. I cannot work out, whether my oven temperature is too slow to begin with, whether the mixture is too wet, and whether the cake is too near the bottom of the oven, when it is put in. The cooked cake is never doughy, but always has the sunken centre. I do so much baking and everything else I make is always most successful. An answer to this letter in *The Listener* would be very much appreciated.

"D.W.," Parnell.

There are several reasons, I suppose, and you have probably already tried altering the temperatures, and the position of the cake in the oven, and the other points you mention. But it is reassuring to have a discussion on the matter, and here is an extract from a letter sent by a helpful listener to your problem when I put it over the air, from M.N., Wanganui:—

"I do think that D.W. should put her cake into a hotter oven; 300 degrees is not enough to lift the cake up and heat it through before starting to cook it. I cut a square of cardboard from the back of a writing pad to fit the tin, cover it with two thicknesses of brown paper, then butter paper. Put the cake in at 350 degrees (the top turned off a few minutes earlier), then put the bottom on medium for 10 or 15 minutes to heat the tin. Leave on low, and do not look for 2 hours. If it is not fairly high then, put back to medium for 10 minutes. Another trick that is worth while is this: When lining the sides of the tin with two thicknesses of brown paper, cut them to extend a good 2 inches above the sides. Take a piece of very stiff brown paper and place over this for a roof. This keeps the steam in and prevents cracking. Remove this when you look about 2 or 2½ hours after the start. I use 5 eggs and 12 oz. flour and cook for 3¼ hours. Good luck, M.N."

### A Heroic Remedy

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I know this sounds crazy, but, believe me, I'm serious. I am a chronic sufferer from chilblains on my toes, no matter what I do or take. This winter I have obtained relief from putting my feet, one at a time, in a bowl of COLD COLD water while I'm standing at the sink, or sitting down anywhere! The relief of that maddening itch is so real that I don't mind that initial agony of the first plunge. Please tell all my fellow-sufferers.

"M.J.'s Mum," Clevedon.

### A Name to Remember

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