



MALTESER CHRISTMAS PUDDING CAKE

Imagine you've been given the job of making the Christmas day dessert... and then you find this recipe! With layers of chocolate cake and Irish cream liqueur buttercream, this magnificent cake doubles up as a table centrepiece that will certainly stun your family this Christmas.

INGREDIENTS

Serves 12–20

400g (3 sticks plus 3 tbsp) unsalted butter
480g (scant 2½ cups) caster sugar
8 eggs
100ml (6½ tbsp) vegetable oil
330g (2½ cups) self-raising flour
150g (1½ cups) cocoa powder

Buttercream

500g (4 sticks plus 2 tbsp) unsalted butter
100g (¾ cup) icing sugar
100ml (6½ tbsp) Irish cream liqueur
20g (¼ cup) cocoa powder

Decoration

White fondant icing and green and red gel food colourings, or ready-made green and red fondant icings
Edible glue (optional)
800g (1lb 12oz) Maltesers
300g (10oz) white chocolate

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Cake release spray or homemade cake release (see page 202)
2 large half-sphere cake moulds
Cake drum
Turntable
Piping bags
Dowel (optional)
Curved flexible scraper or acetate
Fondant holly stamp

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan/350°F/Gas 4) and use either cake release spray or homemade cake release on the inside of both half-sphere tins.
- 2 Cream the butter and sugar together on a high-speed setting until whitened. Crack the eggs into a jug and, one by one, slowly add to the butter and sugar mixture on a low-speed setting. Use a spatula to wipe around the bowl and mix again.
- 3 Pour in the oil and sift in the flour and cocoa powder. Combine again on a low-speed setting, remembering to scrape down the sides of the bowl with a spatula. Do not overmix.
- 4 Pour half the batter into each half-sphere tin. Bake for 1 hour, or until a skewer inserted in the middles comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tins for 5–10 minutes, then turn out onto wire racks and leave to cool completely.

Stacking

- 5 While the sponges are cooling, prepare the buttercream following the instructions on page 200 using the quantities listed here and add the cream liqueur to taste. You may want to put it back into the fridge to firm up.
- 6 Once the sponges are cool, carefully use a knife to cut off the very end of one of the round edges of the sponge. This will create a flat surface to stick down onto the cake drum. Use a knife or a cake leveller to cut both sponges in half horizontally.
- 7 Load the cream liqueur buttercream into a piping bag and snip off the end. Stick the flat bottom of the cake down with buttercream and pipe a layer of buttercream on the sponge, using a palette knife to smooth it down if you wish. Add the next layer of sponge on top and repeat until the cake resembles a ball. Chill in the fridge for 15–30 minutes. If you want to add a central dowel into the cake for extra stability, follow the instructions on page 207. ▶

- 8 While the cake is chilling, sift the cocoa powder into the remaining buttercream and re-whip. Use this buttercream to apply a crumb coat to the outside of the cake (see page 209) and smooth with a curved flexible scraper or make your own with a piece of acetate. Chill for 30 minutes, or until you're ready to decorate.
- 9 While the cake is setting, prepare your fondant. Either dye white fondant icing with gel food colourings or use ready-made green and red fondant icings. Roll out the green fondant with a rolling pin and stamp out two holly leaves. Roll the red fondant into three medium-sized balls and attach to the holly leaves with edible glue or a drop of water. Set aside.
- 10 Once the cake has set, apply another layer of thick chocolate buttercream onto the cake. Gently smooth over with the scraper, acetate or a spoon – don't worry if it's not completely smooth.
- 11 Starting from the bottom, firmly push Maltesers into the buttercream. Continue adding the Maltesers in rows until you reach the top. Set in the fridge.
- 12 Temper the white chocolate (see page 216) and then gently pour over the top of the cake, letting it unevenly drip down around the sides. Leave until tacky, then arrange the fondant icing holly and berries on top.

TOP TIP ★ Cut a piece of acetate to create a curved scraper that will easily move around the curves of the cake. If you haven't got a scraper or acetate, use the back of a spoon!

