

The wind blew the last of the mandarins off my neighbour's tree earlier in the week, and while still gorgeously sweet and juicy, they had suffered slightly from the battering the wind had given them. I decided to bake some of them into a cake, but the two recipes I was contemplating each had ingredients that I didn't have to hand, and the weather was putting me off going shopping. The following is an amalgamation of the recipes using what I did have available.

Upside-Down Ginger & Mandarin Cake with Mandarin Syrup and Toasted Almonds

Serves 6-8

INGREDIENTS:

Cake:

375g flour
180g light brown sugar
20g fresh ginger, finely grated
2 tsp ground cardamom
1 tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground allspice
½ tsp ground nutmeg
1½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
2 eggs, lightly beaten
125g golden syrup
125g treacle (or molasses)
160ml vegetable oil
4-5 mandarins, peeled, halved and pips flicked out

Mandarin Syrup:

60ml mandarin juice (about 3 mandarins)
110g caster sugar

To Serve:

½ cup toasted almonds, roughly chopped
extra mandarin pieces (optional)
Greek yoghurt or whipped cream

METHOD:

- Preheat the oven to 180°C.
- Line a 35x24cm rectangular cake tin with baking paper.
- Place the halved mandarins cut side down on the base of the prepared tin.
- Combine flour, brown sugar, grated ginger, ground spices, baking powder, baking soda, and a pinch of salt in a bowl and mix well.
- In a second medium bowl, combine eggs, treacle, golden syrup, and oil and beat well. Add 250ml water, stir to combine.
- Add wet mixture to flour mixture, whisk to combine.
- Pour cake batter over mandarin halves and bake cake for 40 minutes approx. or until a cake skewer inserted comes out clean.
- Cool in the tin for 10-15 minutes, then turn out onto a cake rack to cool.
- Meanwhile, make the syrup by combining the mandarin juice and caster sugar in a small saucepan.
- Place over medium heat and cook, stirring until the sugar dissolves.
- Bring to the boil, then simmer for about 5 minutes until syrup thickens slightly. Set aside to cool.

TO SERVE:

- Drizzle gingerbread with cooled syrup and scatter over toasted almonds. Serve with yoghurt or whipped cream and extra pieces of fresh mandarin if desired.

