

Paul's Christmas Cake

150g sultanas
150g raisins
150g currants
150g halved glace cherries
100g cut mixed dried peel
500ml apple juice
175g self-raising wholemeal flour
175g self-raising white flour
2 tsp mixed spice
6 tbsp (90ml) sunflower oil
3 tbsp clear honey
2 tbsp dark treacle
250ml Guinness
2 eggs beaten
50g toasted hazelnuts – smashed up a bit

Place the sultanas, raisins, currants, halved cherries and mixed peel in a bowl and stir in the apple juice. Cover and leave to soak overnight.

Pre-heat the oven to 160°C/Gas 3/325°F. Grease and line a deep round 20cm cake tin. Secure with string and triple folded brown paper around the outside.

Sift the flours into a mixing bowl together with the mixed spice and make a well in the centre.

Put the sunflower oil in a bowl, stir in the dark treacle, honey and Guinness. Now add to the sifted flours.

Drain the dried mixed fruit from the apple juice. Discard the apple juice. Add the mixed fruit to the cake mixture. Add the beaten eggs and toasted hazelnuts; thoroughly mix all the ingredients together.

Turn the mixture into the prepared tin and smooth the surface. Bake for two hours or until a skewer comes out clean. Transfer to a wire rack until cold, then lift out of the tin and remove the paper.