



Pink Poodle Cake

The Birthday Cake is always the focal point of the party and its so much fun to create it together with your child. Even very young children can help you decorate the poodle with the mini marshmallows.

For the cake

285g/10oz unsalted butter, room temperature
285g/10oz caster sugar
5 eggs
2 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
285g/10oz self-raising flour
1/4 tsp salt

For the icing

170g/6oz unsalted butter, room temperature
340g/12oz icing sugar, sifted
Pinch salt
1 tbsp milk
Pink food colouring

For the decoration

500 g white mini marshmallows
350g dessicated coconut
4 tbsp apricot jam
Mint Imperials
Yellow Chocolate Sweets
Length of pink ribbon
Liquorice laces
Black liquorice sweets
5 liquorice twists
Pontefract Cake for the nose



You will also need:

A cake board approx 45cm x 55cm
2 x 11 cm diameter coffee saucers (or cut 2 x 11cm/4in diameter circles from paper)
5cm/2in round cutter
Ruler
Serrated knife
Palette knife

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180c/350F/Gas4/Fan 160c. Grease and line a 20cm x 27cm rectangular cake tin. Put 4 paper liners in a muffin tin.
2. Beat the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Beat the eggs and vanilla and add to the butter, then sift over the flour and salt. Beat until just combined.
3. Spoon some batter into the 4 paper cake cases so that they are half full (I used an ice cream scoop). Spoon the rest of the batter into the prepared cake tin and spread out in the tin so that it is level.
4. Bake the cupcakes for 18-20 minutes, until risen, golden and firm, and the cake for 30-35 minutes, until risen and golden and a cocktail stick inserted in the centre comes out clean.
5. Cool the cake and cupcakes completely.

6. Trim the top of the cake so that it is level (a bread knife is good for this). Turn the cake over and place the saucers and head template on the cake (hold templates in place with cocktail sticks). Cut around the templates with a serrated knife. From the leftover cake cut a rectangle 5 1/2cm x 4 1/2cm (picture 5) and a circle 4 1/2 cm in diameter.

7. Remove the paper cases from the cupcakes and trim the tops level. Trim a section 1 1/2 cm deep from one of the cupcakes, so that it fits to the head. Assemble the main part of the cake on a large cake board, using cocktail sticks to secure, if necessary (remove the sticks before serving the cake).

TIP – to prevent your cake board becoming covered in icing, tuck pieces of baking parchment under the edges of the cake

8. To make the icing, beat the butter until pale and fluffy, then beat in the icing sugar a little at a time. Beat in the salt and milk to give a soft, spreadable consistency. Add the food colour, a little at a time, to get a good pink colour.

TIP – add the food colour, a drop at a time, using a cocktail stick.

TIP – for a professional finish, put a thin layer of icing over the cake and cupcakes and leave to dry for around 1 hour. This is called a crumb coating and will trap stray cake crumbs so that they shouldn't appear in your finished icing. Keep remaining icing tightly covered with clingfilm (do not refrigerate).

9. Cover the poodle's body with a thick layer of icing. Pull away the baking parchment and cover the top of the head and main parts of the body in mini marshmallows, pushing them into the icing to stick.

10. Outline the head and centre body with liquorice laces, make an eye and eyelashes using a liquorice sweet and liquorice laces and use a Pontefract Cake or other liquorice sweet for the nose.

11. Trim the cut out circle of cake to 2 cm height. Cover in a layer of icing and position on the cake, just above the front shoulder for the ear. Trim a liquorice twist to reach from the head to the "ear" and insert. Cover the ear in mini marshmallows.

12. Position one cupcake for the tail and two for the feet, then cover in a layer of icing (sit on baking parchment). Trim the liquorice twists to fit from the body to the feet and the tail (body to feet 8cm, body to tail 11cm). Insert the liquorice twists to feet, tail and body (remove the parchment). Cover the tail in mini marshmallows and cover half of the feet in mini marshmallows.

13. Warm the apricot jam and brush over the remaining parts of the cake board. To make the grass to cover the cake board, thoroughly mix the dessicated coconut with a little of the green food colouring and a few drops of water. Strew the green coconut over the cake board and press down onto the board. Decorate with Daisies made from Imperial Mints and yellow M & M's in the centre.

Information

Serves a party

Prep time: 50 minutes

Cook time: 35 minutes

Credits: Annabel Karmel Family Cookbook - bursting with fun and healthy ideas for babies through to adults, the delicious based recipes will make all the family smile, including the fussiest eaters. - £7.99 (Dennis publishing).

