

nature detectives recipe booklet



11 yummy recipes to try out
(including one for wildlife!)

Birthday cake

Basic ingredients

170g margarine
170g caster sugar
170g self-raising flour
3 large eggs
1 teaspoon of baking powder

You'll also need two 8 inch sandwich tins, greased and lined with greaseproof paper.

How to make

Pre-heat your oven to 190C / gas mark 5.

Sieve the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl. Add the margarine, eggs, sugar to the bowl and whisk everything together.

Divide the mixture between the two tins and smooth it over with the back of a spoon so it's level on top.

Bake in the centre of the oven for about 20 minutes, or until cooked.

When are they cooked? If the cake is starting to come away from the edge of the tin it's cooked. You can also check by pushing lightly in the centre of the cake – if it springs back up it's done :O) (be careful trying this though, the cake will be hot!)

Leave the cakes to cool for a few minutes in their tins, before removing them and putting them on a wire rack to cool completely.

To fill

Smother your chosen filling on top of one of the cakes and stack the other cake on top of it.

Jam and freshly whipped cream, fruit, lemon curd or buttercream all make fab fillings!

To decorate

Sprinkle some icing sugar on top; cover it in icing, stick candles in it, or just leave it as it is and eat it straightaway :O)

What do you do with yours?



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Chocolate conkers

An easy peasy recipe that needs no cooking :O)

Makes approx 48 'conkers'

Ingredients

450g Oreo cookies or chocolate bourbon biscuits

225g full fat cream cheese

450g chocolate (milk or dark – or both :O)

How to make

Put the biscuits in a plastic food bag and smash with a rolling pin until they are just fine crumbs (if you have a food processor use it instead – it's super quick!).

Put the cream cheese in a bowl and gradually mix in the biscuit crumbs, stirring it really well until everything has combined.

Shape the mixture into small conker-sized balls.

Put the 'conkers' on a tray lined with greaseproof paper and put them in the fridge for at least two hours to chill.

Melt the chocolate in a bowl and dip the chilled 'conkers' into it making sure they're fully coated (for different shades of brown, dip some in milk chocolate, some in dark! :O)

Set them out on a tray lined with greaseproof paper and put them back in the fridge for the chocolate to set.

Spiky shell

You can leave your chocolate conkers as they are, or make a spiky green outer shell out of marzipan (dyed with food colouring)!



Yummy :O)



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Forest floor cake

Our version of Rocky Road - a magic cake that doesn't need to bake in the oven!

Basic ingredients

175g biscuits – digestives/ginger/rich tea – whatever you like :O)
150g milk chocolate
200g plain chocolate
150g unsalted butter
4 tablespoons of honey or golden syrup

Extras

You'll also need approx 300g of 'extras' to fill out your cake mixture.

Pick and mix what you like best and what looks most like the forest floor – think about twigs, mud, logs, grass, leaves...

We like:

- shredded wheat (they make great 'twigs'),
- bits of chocolate flake (looks like fallen branches)
- peanut butter,
- chopped up glace cherries,
- raisins or other dried fruit,
- mini marshmallows,
- broken up chocolate bars or sweets.

How to make

Put the biscuits in a plastic food bag and smash them up with a rolling pin (not too fine – you want a mix of crumbs and chunks).

Melt the chocolate, butter and honey or syrup in a pan over a low heat. When it's all melted together tip in the biscuits and stir.

Now add your 'extras' (keeping some to decorate the top) and keep stirring until it's all mixed up.

Tip the mixture into a deep tray lined with greaseproof paper and even it out. Sprinkle the rest of your extras on top so it looks like a forest floor, then put it into the fridge to set.

Once it has set, cut it into pieces and eat!

Share your 'forest floor' recipe! Email us: naturedetectives@woodlandtrust.org.uk

DO NOT USE NUTS IF YOU'RE ALLERGIC, OR IF YOU'RE MAKING THIS FOR SOMEONE WHO IS!



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Hedgehog cake ingredients

To make a tasty chocolate hedgehog cake you'll need:



Cake ingredients

200g (8oz) self raising flour
150g (6oz) caster sugar
25g (1oz) cocoa powder
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp vanilla essence
100ml (4fl oz) vegetable oil
225ml (9fl oz) water

Icing ingredients

150g (6oz) cream cheese
75g (3oz) margarine
110g (4oz) chocolate
750g (1lb 10oz) icing sugar
1/2 tsp vanilla essence (optional)



To decorate

Giant chocolate buttons for spikes
Raisins or smarties for eyes
Smarties or glace cherry for nose



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Hedgehog cake



Step one

Pre-heat oven to 200°C/400°F and grease two round cake tins with butter.
Put the flour, baking powder, sugar and cocoa powder into a bowl and mix well.
Pour over the oil, vanilla essence and then water and whisk together.
Bake for about 25mins or until cooked.

Step two

Break the chocolate into pieces, melt in a bowl over a pan of simmering water.
Blend the cream cheese and margarine in a separate bowl until smooth, then stir in the melted chocolate.
Sieve the icing sugar and beat it into the chocolate mixture a little at a time.



Step three

Sandwich the sponges together using a little icing.
Cut 2 pieces from each side of the cake.
Trim 2 small triangles off the front to form the snout.



Step four

Attach the sides to the top of the cake with more icing to form a hedgehog shape.

Step five

Cover the whole cake in icing!

Step six

Add the nose and eyes.
Snap the giant chocolate buttons in half and stick into the icing to form spikes.

Ta da! A fab chocolate hedgehog cake :0)



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Hibernating hedgehog cakes



New and improved!

To make hibernating hedgehog cakes you'll need:

Ingredients

50g (2oz) butter
60ml (2fl oz) golden syrup
110g (4oz) chocolate, chopped
75g (3oz) broken up shredded wheat*

Bun cases

What you need to do:

In a saucepan over a low heat, combine the butter, golden syrup and chocolate.

Stir the butter and chocolate over the heat until they have melted and everything is well blended.

Break up the shredded wheat and mix into the chocolate, stir really well.

Remove from the heat and drop heaped spoonfuls into bun cases.

Place in the fridge until set (about 15mins).

Eat!

Yummy! Lovely hibernating hedgehog cakes :0)

* Thanks to Suzy Coughtrey for this fab shredded wheat tip to make them look more realistic.

If you don't like shredded wheat, use cornflakes instead :O)

Share your favourite recipes and ideas – email us: naturedetectives@woodlandtrust.org.uk



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Bramble jam

This recipe will make 3 jars of bramble jam.

Ingredients

500g blackberries
1 tablespoon lemon juice
½ cup water
450g sugar
2 tablespoons apple pectin



Note: This recipe uses an 800W microwave – adjust times accordingly

How to make

Put the blackberries, lemon juice and water into a microwavable bowl – a pyrex dish is ideal – *do not put anything metal in a microwave.*

Cover and microwave on full power for 10 minutes.

Stir the mixture and cook *without covering* for another 5 minutes on full power.

Strain through a sieve, discard the pips and pulp. * Warning – HOT! *

Put the sugar and 600ml of the blackberry juice back into the bowl. Cover and cook for 5 minutes.

Uncover, stir and cook on medium power for 10 minutes, *stopping to stir after 5 minutes.*

Now add the apple pectin, stir in well.

Leaving uncovered, stir and cook on full power for 5 minutes, then do a *setting test* (put a spoonful onto a cold saucer, leave for a few minutes then poke it with the spoon. If it wrinkles it has set).

Repeat, until it starts to set.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool for a couple of hours (do not put it into jars until it is quite cold).

Pour into clear jars.

How do you eat your jam? On toast, in sandwiches, a dollop with rice pudding...?



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Cobbler

Makes enough for **6 people**.

Ingredients

450g blackberries
50g light muscovado sugar
1 tablespoon self-raising flour

For the topping:

150g self-raising flour
75g butter, cut into pieces
50g ground almonds
50g light muscovado sugar
Finely grated rind of 1 orange
150g carton natural yogurt



How to make

Preheat the oven to 220C (Gas mark 7). *If using a fan oven preheat to 200C.*

In a bowl, mix the blackberries, sugar and flour until the fruit is completely coated. Using the large spoon, transfer the fruit to an ovenproof dish.

To make the topping:

Using a sieve, sift the flour into another large bowl.

Using your fingertips, rub the butter into the flour until the mixture looks like fine breadcrumbs.

Stir in the ground almonds, sugar and orange rind.

Make a well in the centre and tip in the yogurt. Stir until evenly combined, but do not overmix.

Using the tablespoon, spoon the topping around the edge of the fruit.

Bake in the oven for 20 minutes until the topping is risen and golden.

Serve with ice cream, cream or custard!



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Fairy cakes

Makes 18 cakes :O)

Ingredients

150ml pot low fat natural yogurt
(rinse the pot and use it to measure the other ingredients)
1 pot of caster sugar
1 pot of sunflower oil
2 eggs
2 pots of self-raising flour
250g blackberries
Finely grated rind & juice of 1 orange
1 pot of icing sugar
Orange food colouring *(optional)*
50g chocolate and some hundreds & thousands to decorate



How to make

Preheat the oven to 190C (Gas mark 5). *If using a fan oven cook from cold at 180C.*

Lay out 18 paper bun cases on two baking trays.

Tip the yogurt, sugar, oil and eggs into a bowl and whisk until combined.

Tip in the flour, three-quarters of the blackberries (saving some for decorating) and half the orange rind; fold the mixture with a large metal spoon – don't overwork. The mixture should look like a thick batter.

Fill each bun case three-quarters full with the mixture and bake for 20-25 minutes until the cakes are risen and golden. Turn out and cool on a wire rack.

Sift the icing sugar into a bowl, add the remaining orange rind and one tablespoon of orange juice to make a smooth icing. Stir in a few drops of orange food colouring, if you like. Using a teaspoon, spoon a little icing on top of each cake.

To decorate:

There are lots of ways you can decorate your fairy cakes. We like these ideas:

- Top with three blackberries and lightly dust with icing sugar.
- Melt some chocolate then drizzle it over the cakes with a teaspoon.
- Sprinkle the cakes with hundreds and thousands or chocolate strands.



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Jam tarts

Makes yummy 12 jam tarts :O)

Ingredients

175g plain flour
75g butter
2 tablespoons of sugar
Pinch of salt
50ml cold water
12 dollops of jam!

You'll also need a bun tray to bake your jam tarts in.

How to make

Pre-heat your oven to 200C/gas mark 6 (for fan ovens preheat to 180C).

Sieve the flour into a mixing bowl, add the sugar and salt.

Chop up the butter into small pieces and add to the mixing bowl. Rub the mixture together between your fingers until it looks and feels like breadcrumbs.

Slowly add the water to the mixture (you might not need it all), mixing it all together to form a dough.

Scatter some flour on your work surface to stop the dough sticking to it, then gently knead the dough.

Roll the dough out with a rolling pin onto your floured surface until it's about half a centimetre thick (no thicker!).

Cut out circles using a pastry or cookie cutter. If you don't have one, try using a large cup.

Put the pastry circles in the bun tray, gently pushing them into place.

Add a dollop of your favourite jam onto each one (try the bramble jam from our recipe!)

Pop your bun tray into the oven and bake for about 15-20 minutes.

Let them cool before scoffing :O)



Honey cake

Wow! A lovely, sticky honey cake to make and munch:

Ingredients

170g clear honey
85g light brown sugar
140g butter
200g self-raising flour
2 eggs
1 tablespoon milk



How to make your yummy cake

Preheat the oven to 180C (gas mark 4)

Put the honey, sugar and butter into a pan and melt gently over a low heat.

Gradually add the milk, stirring it all together.

Now allow the mixture to cool.

Beat the eggs and add them to the cooled mixture, sieve in the flour too and stir well.

Pour into a greased cake tin

Bake for about 30-40 minutes

Leave the cake to cool for a while then turn it out onto a rack

Voila! One yummy honey cake

Eat it as it is, or decorate it with icing sugar or frosting :O)



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Bird cake

Why should people have all the fun? Here's a tasty treat that birds will love :O)

Ingredients

Bird seed
Raisins
Peanuts
Grated cheese
Suet or lard

You'll also need

Small containers (yoghurts pots are ideal)
String
Scissors
Mixing bowl



How to make

Carefully make a small hole in the bottom of a yoghurt pot.

Thread string through the hole and tie a knot on the inside. Leave enough string so that you can tie the pot to a tree or your bird table.

Allow the lard to warm up to room temperature, but don't melt it. Then cut it up into small pieces and put it in the mixing bowl.

Add the other ingredients to the bowl and mix them together with your finger tips. Keep adding the seed/raisin/cheese mixture and squidging it until the fat holds it all together.

Fill your yoghurt pots with bird cake mixture and put them in the fridge to set for an hour or so.

Hang your speedy bird cakes from trees or your bird table. Watch for greenfinches, tits and possibly even great spotted woodpeckers.

Who comes to taste your bird cake? :O)

Thanks to the RSPB for this fab recipe.



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