FOOD & CULINARY

Mary Berry Recipe For Victoria Sponge

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Introduction: The Timeless Appeal of the Mary Berry Victoria Sponge

There are few cakes quite as iconic, elegant, and thoroughly British as the Victoria Sponge. Named after Queen Victoria herself, who was known to enjoy a slice with her afternoon tea, this simple yet exquisite creation has been a staple of teatime tables and bake-off competitions for generations. While many bakers have their own version, few are as revered as the **Mary Berry Recipe For Victoria Sponge**. Dame Mary Berry, the doyenne of British baking, has perfected a method that consistently yields a light, fluffy, and beautifully even sponge. Whether you are a novice baker or an experienced home cook, mastering her recipe is a rite of passage in the world of baking. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore every detail of Mary Berry's classic Victoria Sponge, from the essential ingredients and equipment to her secret tips for achieving that perfect rise and tender crumb.

Why Mary Berry's Victoria Sponge is the Gold Standard

Mary Berry's approach to baking is synonymous with precision, reliability, and classic flavours. Her Victoria Sponge recipe is often described as the benchmark for this traditional cake. What sets the **Mary Berry Recipe For Victoria Sponge** apart from others is her emphasis on equal weights of the core ingredients—butter, sugar, eggs, and flour—a principle known as the "pound cake" method when scaled. This ensures a beautifully balanced batter that rises evenly and has a delicate, melt-in-the-mouth texture. Additionally, Mary Berry's instructions are famously clear and foolproof, making her recipe the go-to for bakers aiming for consistent results every time. The cake is traditionally filled with raspberry jam and a generous layer of whipped cream or buttercream, then dusted with caster sugar. It is the very definition of simplicity done perfectly.

Essential Ingredients for a Perfect Sponge

Before you begin, gathering the right ingredients is crucial. Mary Berry stresses the importance of using ingredients at room temperature for the best emulsion and rise. Here is what you will need for the **Mary Berry Recipe For Victoria Sponge**:

For the Sponge

- 225g (8 oz) unsalted butter – softened at room temperature. Using unsalted allows you to control the salt level.
- 225g (8 oz) caster sugar – fine sugar dissolves more easily, creating a lighter texture.
- 4 large free-range eggs – beaten lightly. They should be at room temperature to prevent the batter from curdling.
- 225g (8 oz) self-raising flour – sifted to incorporate air and remove lumps.
- 1 teaspoon baking powder – this extra lift is Mary Berry's signature touch for a taller sponge.
- Optional: 1-2 tablespoons milk – if the mixture seems too stiff, a splash of milk helps achieve a dropping consistency.

For the Filling and Topping

- Approximately 4 tablespoons good quality raspberry jam – seedless or with seeds, as you prefer.
- 300ml (½ pint) double cream – lightly whipped to soft peaks. Alternatively, you can use a simple buttercream (150g softened butter mixed with 300g icing sugar and 1-2 tablespoons milk).
- Caster sugar for dusting – a light, even dusting on top completes the classic look.

Step-by-Step Method: How to Make Mary Berry's Victoria Sponge

Follow these steps carefully, and you will be rewarded with a showstopper cake. This method is directly adapted from the iconic **Mary Berry Recipe For Victoria Sponge**.

1. Preparing Your Equipment

Preheat your oven to 180°C (160°C fan) or Gas Mark 4. Grease and line two 20cm (8 inch) round sandwich tins with baking parchment. Mary Berry recommends using a high-sided tin to allow the cake to rise without spilling over. Ensure your tins are the same size for even layers.

2. Creaming the Butter and Sugar

Place the softened butter and caster sugar in a large mixing bowl. Using an electric hand whisk or a stand mixer, cream them together until the mixture is pale, light, and fluffy. This should take about 3-5 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl to ensure even mixing.

3. Incorporating the Eggs

Add the beaten eggs a little at a time, whisking well after each addition. If the mixture looks as if it is curdling (separating), add a tablespoon of the sifted flour with the last addition of egg to bring it back together. The mixture should be smooth and glossy at this stage.

4. Folding in the Flour

Sift the self-raising flour and baking powder together into the bowl. Using a large metal spoon or a spatula, gently fold the flour into the creamed mixture. Mary Berry emphasises a light hand here—over-mixing will knock out the air and result in a dense cake. Fold until no streaks of flour remain, and the batter is uniform. If the batter seems too thick, add one or two tablespoons of milk to achieve a soft dropping consistency (that is, the batter will drop easily off a spoon).

5. Dividing the Batter

Divide the batter equally between the two prepared tins. Use a spatula to spread it evenly to the edges, creating a slight dip in the centre if you wish (this helps prevent a dome). Gently tap each tin on the work surface to release any trapped air bubbles.

6. Baking the Sponges

Place the tins on the middle shelf of the preheated oven. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the sponges are golden brown and spring back when lightly pressed with a fingertip. Another test is to insert a skewer into the centre—it should come out clean. Do not open the oven door during the first 15 minutes of baking. Once baked, remove the tins from the oven and let the sponges cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then turn them out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Mary Berry's Expert Tips for a Perfect Rise

Even experienced bakers can sometimes have a sponge that sinks or domes unevenly. Here are Mary Berry's tried-and-tested tips to ensure your **Mary Berry Recipe For Victoria Sponge** turns out flawless every time:

- Use room-temperature ingredients: Cold butter or eggs won't emulsify properly, leading to a greasy or

dense cake.

- Don’t overcream: While creaming butter and sugar is essential, over-creaming can incorporate too much air, causing the cake to rise then collapse. Stop when it is pale and fluffy.
- Sift flour twice: Sifting not only aerates but also ensures even distribution of baking powder.
- Fold gently: Use a figure-of-eight motion to fold in the flour without deflating the batter.
- Check your oven temperature: An oven that is too hot will cause the cake to dome and crack; too cool and it will be dense. Use an oven thermometer for accuracy.
- Level the tops if needed: If your sponges have domed slightly, use a serrated knife to level them before filling. Mary Berry often slices a thin layer off the top for a flat surface.

Classic Filling and Assembly

Once your sponges are completely cool, it is time to assemble the classic Victoria Sponge. Mary Berry’s preferred filling is a generous layer of raspberry jam and lightly whipped cream.

Step 1: Whip the Cream

Pour the double cream into a chilled bowl and whip using an electric mixer or a whisk until soft peaks form. Be careful not to overwhip, as it can turn into butter. For a stiffer hold, you can add a tablespoon of icing sugar.

Step 2: Spread the Jam

Place one sponge layer on a serving plate or cake stand. Spread the raspberry jam evenly over the top, leaving a small border around the edge so the filling does not squeeze out when the top layer is added.

Step 3: Add the Cream

Spoon the whipped cream over the jam and spread it gently. Alternatively, you can pipe it in swirls for a neater finish. If you prefer buttercream, spread that instead.

Step 4: Top and Dust

Place the second sponge layer on top, pressing down very lightly. Do not compress the filling. Dust the top generously with caster sugar using a fine sieve. This simple dusting is the traditional finish for a Victoria Sponge—no icing or fondant needed.

Delicious Variations on the Classic

While the original **Mary Berry Recipe For Victoria Sponge** is perfect as it is, you can easily adapt it to suit your taste or the occasion. Here are some popular variations:

- Lemon Curd Victoria Sponge: Replace the raspberry jam with tangy lemon curd and fill with lemon-flavoured buttercream.
- Strawberry and Cream: Use strawberry jam and sliced fresh strawberries between the layers for a summer twist.
- Chocolate Victoria Sponge: Replace 25g of the flour with cocoa powder for a chocolate sponge, and fill with chocolate buttercream and raspberry jam.
- Vegan Version: Substitute butter with a plant-based block, use a flax egg (1 tablespoon ground flaxseed mixed with 3 tablespoons water per egg), and ensure your self-raising flour is vegan-friendly. Use dairy-free cream and jam.
- Gluten-Free: Use a gluten-free self-raising flour blend and add a teaspoon of xanthan gum to replicate the structure.

Serving and Storing Your Victoria Sponge

A freshly made Victoria Sponge is best enjoyed on the day it is assembled, as the sponge can soften if filled

with cream. However, you can bake the sponges a day ahead and store them in an airtight container. Assemble a few hours before serving for the best texture. When serving, use a sharp serrated knife to cut clean slices. This cake pairs wonderfully with a pot of English breakfast tea, Earl Grey, or a glass of cold milk.

To store leftovers, place the cake in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to two days. Remove from the fridge 30 minutes before serving to allow the sponge to come back to room temperature for optimal softness. The sponge itself freezes well (without filling)—wrap each layer tightly in cling film and then foil. Freeze for up to three months. Thaw at room temperature before filling.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Even dedicated bakers can encounter issues. Here are common pitfalls associated with the **Mary Berry Recipe For Victoria Sponge** and how to fix them:

- Sunken centre: Usually caused by opening the oven door too early or under-baking. Ensure the cake is fully set before removing.
- Dry sponge: Over-baking or too much flour. Measure ingredients accurately and check the cake a few minutes early.
- Greasy texture: Butter and sugar not creamed enough, or eggs added too quickly. Beat thoroughly.
- Uneven rise: Batter not evenly divided, or oven temperature uneven. Use scales to divide batter, and rotate tins halfway through baking.
- Filling leaking out: Too much cream or jam, or the sponge is too soft. Spread filling leaving a 1cm border.

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