FOOD & CULINARY

Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe

PUBLISHED
November 25, 2026

REFERENCE
#1795583578796824

Introduction: A Timeless Classic

Few desserts evoke the same sense of nostalgia and simple elegance as a perfectly baked Victoria sponge. Light, airy, and filled with a luscious layer of jam and cream, it is the quintessential British teatime treat. While many bakers have their own version, one name stands above the rest in the world of classic British baking: Dame Mary Berry. Her **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe** is widely regarded as the gold standard—a foolproof formula that delivers a moist, evenly risen sponge every time. Whether you are a novice baker looking to impress or a seasoned cook seeking perfection, mastering this recipe is a rite of passage. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore everything you need to know about the **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe**, from ingredient selection to expert tips, variations, and serving ideas.

The Legacy of Mary Berry and the Victoria Sponge

Mary Berry's career as a cookery writer and television presenter has spanned more than five decades. Her recipes are celebrated for their clarity, reliability, and traditional British charm. The Victoria sponge—named after Queen Victoria, who was fond of a slice with her afternoon tea—has been a staple of British baking for over a century. Mary Berry's rendition of this classic cake has become a benchmark for home bakers worldwide. What makes her **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe** so special? It is the precise balance of ingredients, the emphasis on creaming butter and sugar until pale and fluffy, and the gentle folding of flour to retain air. This results in a sponge that is both tender and sturdy enough to hold a generous filling of raspberry jam and whipped cream.

Essential Ingredients for Success

Before you begin, it is crucial to gather the right ingredients. The **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe** calls for simple components, but quality matters. Use unsalted butter at room temperature for the best creaming texture. Eggs should also be at room temperature to emulsify smoothly. Self-raising flour is preferred for its built-in leavening agents, but if you only have plain flour, add 1½ teaspoons of baking powder per 6 ounces (170g) of flour. Caster sugar (superfine sugar) dissolves easily, creating a finer crumb. For the filling, good-quality strawberry or raspberry jam is essential, and double cream (heavy cream) should be whipped to soft peaks—not too stiff, or it will make the cake difficult to slice.

Step-by-Step Method: Mary Berry's Perfect Victoria Sponge

Follow these carefully tested steps to replicate the **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe** at home.

Preheat and Prepare the Tins

Preheat your oven to 180°C (160°C fan) or 350°F (Gas Mark 4). Grease two 8-inch (20cm) round sandwich tins and line the bases with baking parchment. Mary Berry recommends a light greasing with butter and a dusting of

flour to ensure the cakes release easily.

Cream the Butter and Sugar

In a large mixing bowl, beat 200g (7oz) of softened unsalted butter and 200g (7oz) of caster sugar together until pale, light, and fluffy. This should take about 3-5 minutes with an electric mixer. The mixture should look airy and almost doubled in volume. Scrape down the sides of the bowl occasionally.

Add the Eggs, One at a Time

Lightly beat 4 large eggs in a separate jug. Gradually add them to the creamed mixture, a little at a time, beating well after each addition. If the mixture looks as if it might curdle (separate), add a tablespoon of the flour from the measured amount to stabilize it. This is a common pitfall that Mary Berry addresses in her **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe**.

Fold in the Flour

Sift 200g (7oz) of self-raising flour over the mixture. Using a large metal spoon or a silicone spatula, fold the flour gently into the batter. Use a figure-eight motion to combine without knocking out the air. Stop as soon as there are no streaks of flour visible. Overmixing will result in a dense cake.

Divide and Bake

Divide the batter evenly between the two prepared tins. Gently level the tops with the back of a spoon. Bake on the middle shelf of the oven for 20-25 minutes, or until the sponges are golden brown and spring back when lightly touched with a fingertip. A skewer inserted into the center should come out clean. Cool the cakes in their tins for 5 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Assemble the Cake

Once the sponges are cold, choose the top side of one cake to be the bottom of the finished cake. Put it on a serving plate. Spread a generous layer of good-quality raspberry or strawberry jam (about 3-4 tablespoons) over the sponge. Whip 300ml (½ pint) of double cream until it just holds its shape—avoid over-whipping. Spoon or pipe the cream over the jam, then carefully place the second sponge on top. Sift a dusting of icing sugar over the top for a classic finish.

Pro Tips for a Flawless Sponge

Even with a fail-safe **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe**, small details can make a big difference. Here are some expert suggestions:

- Weigh your ingredients accurately: Baking is a science. Use digital scales for precision, especially for flour and sugar.
- Ensure even tins: Use tins of the same size and material. Light-coloured metal tins promote even browning.
- Don't open the oven door too early: Wait until the cakes have set (after about 15 minutes) to avoid a collapse.
- Level the sponges if necessary: If one dome is higher, use a serrated knife to slice it flat before assembling.
- Chill the cream slightly: Whipping cream that is very cold yields a better volume, but be careful not to overbeat it into butter.

Classic Variations on the Mary Berry Victoria Sponge

While the original **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe** is perfection itself, you can introduce subtle twists without compromising the classic appeal.

Lemon Curd Victoria Sponge

Replace half the jam with a layer of homemade or high-quality lemon curd. The tangy citrus pairs beautifully with the sweet sponge and cream. Mary Berry herself often recommends this adaptation in her books.

Berry and Cream Stack

Add fresh strawberries, raspberries, or blueberries on top of the cream before placing the second layer. This creates a vibrant, fruity center and adds texture.

Chocolate Marble Sponge

Divide the batter in half and fold 1½ tablespoons of cocoa powder (sifted) into one half. Spoon both batters into the tins in alternating dollops, then swirl lightly with a knife for a marbled effect. This is a fun way to introduce chocolate while keeping the Victoria sponge structure.

Gluten-Free Version

Using a good-quality gluten-free self-raising flour blend (one that contains xanthan gum) will yield a nearly identical texture. Follow the **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe** exactly, but allow the cakes to cool completely in the tin before turning out, as gluten-free sponges are more fragile.

Serving Suggestions and Perfect Pairings

A Victoria sponge is traditionally served at afternoon tea, but it also makes a lovely dessert for picnics, birthday parties, or casual gatherings. For a truly British experience, serve slices on delicate china plates with a pot of freshly brewed Earl Grey or Darjeeling tea. The mild floral notes of the tea complement the jam and cream without overpowering the cake. If you prefer coffee, a cappuccino or flat white also works well, as the creamy texture mirrors the cake's filling.

How to Store Your Victoria Sponge

Once assembled, a Victoria sponge is best eaten within 24 hours due to the fresh cream filling. If you need to prepare ahead, bake the sponges a day in advance, wrap them tightly in cling film once cool, and store at room temperature. Assemble no more than 2-4 hours before serving. Leftover cake should be refrigerated (in an airtight container) and will keep for up to two days, but the sponge may dry out slightly. To revive, microwave a slice for 10 seconds (no longer) before eating.

Common Questions About the Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe

Can I use margarine instead of butter? Mary Berry always recommends butter for the best flavour and texture. Margarine contains more water, which can lead to a denser sponge. Stick with unsalted butter for the authentic result.

Why did my sponge sink in the middle? This usually happens if the oven door was opened too early, or if the batter was overmixed. Ensure your oven temperature is accurate and handle the batter gently.

Can I freeze the sponge layers? Yes! Unfilled sponges freeze very well. Wrap each layer separately in cling film and then foil. Freeze for up to three months. Defrost at room temperature before assembling.

Is it necessary to line the tins? Yes, even if the tins are non-stick, lining the bases with baking parchment ensures clean release and prevents the sponge from catching on the bottom.

Why the Mary Berry Recipe Remains Unbeatable

In the crowded world of baking recipes, the **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe** has endured not because of novelty, but because of its unwavering reliability. Mary Berry's method emphasizes the importance

of technique over shortcuts. Every instruction, from creaming to folding, serves a purpose. The result is a cake that is light, evenly risen, and brimming with buttery flavour—exactly what a Victoria sponge should be. Even amateur bakers who follow the recipe word for word often achieve a professional-looking result. That is the hallmark of a master recipe.

Conclusion: Your Journey to Sponge Perfection

Mastering the **Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Cake Recipe** is more than just learning to bake a cake; it is about embracing a piece of British culinary heritage. With its simple ingredients and clear techniques, this recipe empowers anyone to create a beautiful, delicious dessert that will earn compliments at any table. Whether you stick strictly to the classic version or explore creative variations, the foundation is always sound. So preheat your oven, dust off your sandwich tins, and experience the joy of baking a perfect Victoria sponge. Your afternoon tea will never be the same again.

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