



Sally Biggs

Las Posadas are an important Mexican Christmas tradition. 'Posada' means 'inn' or 'lodging' and the nine-day fiesta leading up to Christmas Day revolves around re-enactments of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and their search for shelter. The celebrations begin with a procession and end with the sharing of food and drink, and – for children especially – the breaking of a papier mâché piñata filled with sweets and gifts. This piñata-style cake is a great way to share in the celebrations. Sally filled her chocolate-flavoured cake with Smarties for a colourful surprise when the cake is sliced, but you can use any chocolates or sweets you like. It's a cake that's bound to get people talking as the admiring recipients try to work out how on earth you got the treats inside.

PIÑATA CAKE

SERVES 16–20

340g unsalted butter, softened

340g caster sugar

225g self-raising flour

115g cocoa powder

6 medium eggs

splash of milk

FILLING AND FROSTING

900ml double cream

118g strawberry flavour Angel Delight (or choose your favourite flavour)

250g sugar-coated chocolates, such as Smarties, M&M's etc.

multi-coloured sprinkles, to decorate

sliced strawberries, to decorate (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4. Grease and line four 20cm sandwich tins.
2. Beat the butter and sugar using a wooden spoon or electric mixer, until light and fluffy. Sift the flour and cocoa powder together into a separate bowl.
3. Add one egg and a tablespoon of the flour mixture to the butter and beat briefly until combined. Keep repeating this step until all the eggs, flour and cocoa have been added. Add the splash of milk with the final addition of flour and cocoa and fold until thoroughly combined.
4. Divide the mixture between the tins. Bake for 20–25 minutes, until the tops spring back when lightly pressed and a skewer inserted in the centre of the cakes comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tins for 5–10 minutes before turning out on to wire racks to cool completely.
5. When cool, cut a 15cm round hole in the centre of two of the cakes.
6. To make the filling and frosting, beat the double cream and Angel Delight with an electric whisk, until it has a spreadable consistency.
7. To assemble, spread a layer of frosting over one of the whole sponges then top with one of the sponges with the hole. Spread more frosting around the ring of sponge and place the other sponge with the hole on top of that and spread more frosting over it. Pour the sugar-coated chocolates into the hole. Finally top with the last whole sponge. Spread the remaining frosting over the top and down the sides of the cake. Decorate the top with the sprinkles and strawberries (if using). This cake is best stored in the fridge and eaten within 3 days.