

Eccles Cakes by Elizabeth Raffad



JAMES Birch's shop in Eccles, opposite the parish church, began selling Eccles cakes in 1793 and the recipe was given to him by his wife who was house maid to Elizabeth Raffald influential book *The Experienced Housekeeper* almost a quarter of a century before it is thought to be the first time they had been sold commercially. Elizabeth served them regularly when she was housekeeper at Arley Hall in Cheshire for Lady Warburton.

During this period, many local families had their own, particular recipe, but true Eccles cakes should always contain currants: these dried fruits have a much stronger flavour than raisins and they remain popular throughout the world to this day.

Often paired simply with Lancashire cheese, .

Eccles Cakes with Lancashire Cheese & Scarisbrick Beetroot

Ingredients

500g puff pastry
40g soft butter
½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
50g candied peel
100g brown sugar
200g currants
1 tsp freshly chopped ginger
1 egg white whisked

Method

Combine together the butter, sugar, fruit and spices.
Roll out the pastry to about 4mm thick and cut into 10cm circles.
Place a small spoonful of filling into the centre of each circle. Draw the edges together over the fruit and pinch to seal. Then turn over and press gently to flatten the cakes.

Make a small slash in the top of each cake and place on a baking tray.
Brush with the egg white and lightly dust with sugar before baking for about 20 minutes at 220* Gas mark 6.

Serve with Creamy Lancashire Cheese & Red Velvet Beetroot (Available from M & S & Booths)