

Spring

...fit for the Queen

tea

The month of April brings us lots of reasons to celebrate. There is a real sense of spring in the air, the evenings are lighter for longer, the sun warmer and the Easter holidays just around the corner! It is also our Queen's birthday, so set the table with a vase of spring flowers and pretty napkins and enjoy our spring tea fit for the Queen!

01. Gin and Tonic Fairy Cakes

I have a new neighbour! Fiona moved in a few weeks ago – she loves cooking and is a passionate baker. This recipe is hers and these dainty, boozy cakes are delicious. I'm sure the Queen would approve! Warning – they do have a good kick of gin in them so if you are serving them to kids, reduce the gin and add more tonic!

Preparation: 20 minutes
Cooking: 20 minutes
Makes: 12 fairy cakes

Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan). In a small saucepan, add **30mls tonic water, juice and zest of 1½ limes** and **40g sugar**. Bring to a boil and simmer for five minutes until syrup-like. Remove from the heat and add **100ml gin**. Allow to cool. Meanwhile, mix together **150g golden caster sugar, 17g cornflour, 140g self-raising flour** and **2/3 tsp baking powder** and put in a food processor. Add **150g unsalted butter** at room temperature, **three large eggs** and **2 tbsp of the gin syrup**. Mix in the processor briefly, about 10 seconds or until evenly mixed, divide between 12 muffin cases and bake in the oven for 15-18 minutes until risen and golden brown. Insert a skewer and if it comes out

clean, they are ready. Remove from the oven and brush each cup cake generously with the syrup two or three times. Allow to cool and transfer them to a wire rack. Decorate with lime zest and enjoy.

02. Chive and Lemon Scones

With a filling of cream cheese, smoked salmon, snipped chives and lemon zest, no spring tea party is complete without them. Thank you Fiona, again!

Preparation: 15 minutes
Cooking: 12 minutes
Makes: Six scones

Preheat your oven to 220°C (fan 200°C) and line a baking sheet with non-stick paper. Tip into a bowl **225g self-raising flour** (a mixture of wholemeal and white is delicious) with **½ tsp salt**. Add **50g chilled salted butter**, cut into small pieces and rub together with your fingers to make a fine-crumbed mixture. Gently mix in a handful of snipped chives, the **zest of a lemon** and **1tsp cracked black pepper**. Measure **125ml buttermilk** and add **4 tbsp full-fat milk** (more if using wholemeal flour) to slacken it. Make a well in the middle of the flour mixture and pour in most of the buttermilk. Mix together with a palette knife until you have a soft, slightly sticky dough. Add more liquid to gather any loose dry bits and lift the ball gently on to a lightly floured surface. Knead a couple of times to smooth the dough. Pat the dough flat until it reaches a thickness of about 2cms, dip a 5.5cm round cutter into flour and then

push firmly into the dough without twisting. Keep doing this and lightly push together any trimmings. You should make six scones. Place them on the baking sheet, sift a little flour over them and bake for 10-12 minutes until risen and golden. Make the filling by mixing together **180g cream cheese**, with **100g roughly chopped smoked salmon**, more **snipped chives, lemon zest, black pepper** and **a few drops of lemon juice** to taste. To serve, cut each scone in half and fill generously with the cream cheese mixture and sprinkle over a little dusting of **paprika**.

03. Potted Crab

Crabs are just coming into season and if you have a good fishmonger who will prepare the crab meat for you, served with thin slices of fresh brown bread and creamy butter, this is a winner! Most supermarkets sell ready-prepared Cornish crab.

Preheat the oven to 150°C. You'll need **300-350 crab meat** (a mixture of light and dark). Keep the two separate. Gently melt **225g unsalted butter**, preferably Danish or French and then pour the butter carefully from the saucepan into another pan. You'll see the sediment, the white liquid, at the bottom. Discard this and repeat. You're then left with the yellow clear clarified butter. Add to the butter **½ tsp cayenne pepper**, a good **pinch of mace** and another of **nutmeg, lemon juice** to taste, salt and pepper. Add your white crab meat to the butter and use half of this mixture to put a layer in six small ramekins.



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Now add the dark meat and finish with the remaining white meat. Place the ramekins in a roasting tin, pour boiling water to come halfway up their sides and bake in the oven for 25 minutes. Remove and cool, then clarify another **120g butter** and spoon on top of the ramekins. Keep in the fridge and although better eaten that day, they can be kept for three or four days. Before eating, remove from the fridge for 20 minutes or so

(you don't want them to be too cold), run a knife around the edges, tip them out on to a plate and serve with slices of fresh brown bread.

Make some dainty sandwiches filled with a mixture of cream cheese, chopped fresh basil and mint and thin slices of cucumber or creamy Stilton scattered with peppery watercress leaves. Try fillets of smoked trout mashed together with

horseradish cream spread generously on buttered brown bread and again with watercress leaves. Taste for salt and black pepper and don't forget to remove the crusts!

For more baking recipes and lots of tips, have a look at Fiona's baking for charity website www.bakeachange.org