



## **Cake company revives baking in a box**

This Christmas the Cornish based Incredible Fruitcake Co. is reviving the practice of baking cakes in a wooden box, having discovered that this traditional method dating back to the middle ages produces exceptionally tasty and moist results.

The fruitcake was first introduced in Roman times when it bore a strong similarity to bread. In the middle ages, the fruitcake as we know it was born. The main feature of the cake was its shape: round and flat, the circular shape symbolising the cyclical nature of the seasons and life. The first heavy fruitcakes were baked in a flour and water crust to protect them from the heat. Wood then replaced the pastry until tin was used to make cooking utensils in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The history of the fruitcake**

- The earliest recipe dates back to Roman times when pomegranate seeds, pine nuts and raisins were mixed into barley mash.
- In the 13<sup>th</sup> century dried fruits began to arrive in Britain, from Portugal and the east Mediterranean.
- Honey, spices and preserved fruits were added to breads and the name fruitcake was first used.
- In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Europeans added nuts to their fruitcakes, which they saved to eat until the following year in the hope it would bring them another successful harvest.
- Traditionally the dried fruits and spices of the Christmas cake represented the gifts of the Wise Men. The fruitcake was baked with a bean in it and was given to guests during the twelve days of Christmas. Whoever got the bean was supposed to be a guardian angel for the family for the year.
- Many people feel fruitcakes improve with age and some cakes have been eaten 25 years after baking.

## **Baking with a wooden box**

The Incredible Fruitcake Co. cakes make a thoughtful and unusual gift for food lovers. Their traditional fruitcakes are made the old fashioned way - by hand and cooked long and slow in a box to a family recipe. Only the finest ingredients are used, with no additives, supplements or preservatives. The cake is sent to you in its wooden box together with a recipe booklet illustrating how you can use the box time and time again to bake a whole range of fruitcakes at home. The box is made from sustainable managed forests and packaging is kept to a minimum to keep it as environmentally friendly as possible.

Cakes can be posted to you directly or gift wrapped to friends and family for Christmas. To place an order visit: [www.incrediblefruitcake.com](http://www.incrediblefruitcake.com) or call 01579 350 086.

## **Top Tips for a delicious fruitcake this Christmas**

- Make your cake at least a month in advance to really let the flavours develop.
- Boiled fruitcakes are the easiest to make.
- Use fresh local ingredients where possible.
- Don't skimp on the brandy, using a good quality French brandy will make all the difference.
- Both your eggs and butter should be at room temperature. Make sure you take them out of the fridge well before starting to make the cake.
- Don't beat fruitcakes. Just mix evenly only to ensure that there is an even mix. Don't aerate like a sponge!
- Soak fruit in alcohol (if using) the night before, or even a few days before to ensure that there is a good take up of the flavour in the fruit.
- Preheat oven to the correct temperature before putting cake in.
- Make an indent in the mixture with the back of a spoon before placing cake in the oven to help the cake end up being flat on top!
- To test if a fruitcake is baked push a skewer into it and if cooked it will come out clean. Cakes also sizzle slightly while they are cooking, so they should be quiet when cooked!

## **Note to Editors**

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- The Incredible Fruitcake Company is based in Cornwall and was set up in 2004 by Mary Galbraith and Debbie Swift.
- A small original fruitcake in a box is available via mail order (price £20.00)