



RECIPE CARD WK5

# VICTORIA SANDWICHES

Although named after Queen Victoria, these sponge cakes had been around from the early Stuart period (17th century). The growing accessibility to copper technology (egg whisking bowls and moulds), and decreasing price of sugar meant that by the 19th century, they were within reach of nearly everyone.

## Original recipe

Unpublished manuscript written by Avis Crocombe, c.1860. Manuscript now in the possession of English Heritage at Audley End House.

*To 14 eggs 1lb ½ sifted sugar, 1lb of flour dried and sifted. Whisk the eggs till quite thick then add the sugar, mix it well together, add the flour, and a little orange flower water, a little volatile salts and bitter almonds, have ready your molds well butter'd and sugar'd. Pin band's round the Top and bake in a moderate oven.*

## Adapting the recipe for modern use

### Modern version

6–7 eggs, 12oz/675g caster sugar (plus a little extra for lining the tin), 8oz/450g flour, 1–2tsp orange flower water, scant tsp baking powder, 2–4oz ground almonds. Jam of your choosing.

Whisk the eggs thoroughly and add the sugar, mixing well. Add

flour, orange flower water and almonds to taste. Butter a square or rectangular cake tin and coat the butter with a thin layer of sugar (icing sugar will also work). Bake at 180°C for 30–40 mins or until a thin skewer comes out clean. Cool, then slice the cake across horizontally, and cut into fingers. Sandwich the slices together with jam and pile them up on a plate (jenga-like). Serving cream on the side is entirely optional.

## RECIPE NOTES

Sal volatile (smelling salts – usually based on hartshorn distilled with ammonia and crystallised) is used here as a raising agent. There was a long history of experimenting with raising agents – from potash to hartshorn shavings – but most either didn't work, or made cakes taste funny if the cook wasn't experienced at using them. Baking powder – a mix of bicarb and cream of tartar – was finally introduced in the 1850s, but many cooks resisted using it, as they felt it deskilled their work.