

#FOOD



## One batter, many cakes

When it comes to baking a plain cake or pound cake, we all have our own favourite go-to recipe. This one is mine, which I came across years ago. This is a fool-proof, time-saving recipe, and so basic that it can be used to make countless numbers of treats and desserts.

You can use your choice of favourite toppings, fillings, chocolates, fruits,

So, bake a batch, serve it with tea or coffee and you will find yourself making this on a regular basis. Happy Baking Everyone!

### THE BATTER RECIPE

#### Ingredients

1½ cups flour  
½ cups corn flour  
3 eggs



creams, and frostings to make a wide range of desserts. And no one will ever know that you are using the same recipe over and over again.

Usually, I first place the eggs and sugar in a food processor and whisk till the sugar dissolves. Then I add the rest of the ingredients, blitz for a few seconds to mix everything, add a splash of water and the batter is ready to bake.

The cakes I'm sharing here are simple, easy and only require an extra ingredient or two and they taste completely different from one another. The pound cake is so delicious just on its own that it tastes good even while it's warm, and will be gone before it has time to cool down.

Brush a thin layer of simple sugar syrup on top to make it soft and moist. I personally prefer the crusty top. A bite of the warm crust and a sip of bitter sweet coffee help me to unwind, relax and simply make me happy.

¼ cups sugar  
2 tsp baking powder  
A pinch of salt  
1 tsp vanilla essence  
½ cup oil  
½ cup water

#### Method

Place the eggs and sugar in a clean dry bowl and whisk till the eggs become creamy and the sugar has dissolved completely. Add the oil and vanilla essence and whisk till the oil has mixed with the eggs. Sift all the dry ingredients directly in to the bowl of eggs and oil mixture. You will want to first start mixing with a spatula, scraping down the sides as you fold in the flour. Then run the whisk for a few seconds to evenly mix the dry ingredients to the wet. At this point, the batter will be thick and sticky. Add the water and whisk just enough to make a smooth even batter. And now that we have our batter, let's start baking!

Pound cake and Victorian Sponge Cake—

Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour at 180°C

Cupcakes —

Bake for 18-25 minutes at 180°C

**Tip:** The key to baking any soft fluffy cake is not to overwork the batter. Once you add the flour, whisking the batter more than necessary will make the cake dense and rubbery.

While making the Jello Cake Squares, make the instant jello according to the instructions on the packet. You will find that the instant jello sets pretty quickly while soaking the cakes. When you see that it's starting to solidify on the cake, just microwave the jello for 30-40 seconds and continue with the rest of the cake cubes.

Soak the cake cubes in jello or chocolate for a few seconds to let the cake absorb a decent layer. You might want to break the first piece and taste it to see how long you have to soak the cake. But be very careful, as hot jello and chocolate will break the cake and make



it soggy if left to soak for too long.

A simple sugar syrup is made by dissolving equal parts of sugar to equal parts of water. Brush syrup on top of the pound cake or between layers of cake to keep it moist.

The baking time at a certain given temperature varies from oven to oven, especially if it's an electric oven.

**By Nafisa Ahmed Sonali**  
**Photo and Food: Nafisa Ahmed Sonali**

## From the hilly cuisine

There is no shortage of variety when it comes to food in our country. Even Western dishes have managed to squeeze into the norm. A quick evidence of that can be found in the selections available on the everyday food delivery apps on our smartphones. But if you are someone who is not satisfied with what's on offer, and want to try something truly unique, why not give this dish from Chakma cuisine a try?

### STIR FRIED BEEF BAMBOO SHOOTS WITH LEMON BASIL LEAVES

#### Ingredients

500g boneless beef (cube cut)  
1 cinnamon stick (2" long)



5 green cardamom  
1 tsp whole black paper  
2 bay leaves  
Salt to taste  
3-4 cups water  
½ cup canola oil  
6-8 pcs fresh bamboo shoots (trimmed, sliced and boiled in plain water for 3 minutes and drained, or canned sliced bamboo shoots)  
1 cup chopped onion  
1 tbsp chopped ginger  
1 tbsp chopped garlic  
1 tsp turmeric powder  
1 tsp red chilli powder  
1 tbsp roasted cumin powder  
10-15 lemon basil leaves  
5 green chillies

#### Method

In a large pot, put beef, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, cardamoms, black paper, salt and water. Cook the meat on medium-low flame with lid on until the meat is tender. Heat oil in a frying pan on medium heat. Add onions, and sauté until they start to turn golden. Add ginger, garlic, and cook for 1 minute while constantly stirring. Add the cooked beef along with turmeric, red chilli powder, cumin powder and sauté for a few minutes with constant stirring until oil comes out. Then add sliced bamboo shoots, lemon basil leaves, green chillies and stir fry it for 2-3 minutes. Check and adjust the salt, and serve.

**Recipe and Photo:**  
**Chiangmi Talukder Lena**