

## Clementine & Almond Cake

*Pan de mandarina i almendra*

Puréed, boiled clementines lend themselves to an indescribably moist, citrus-flavoured, flourless almond cake. This cake has proven very popular with family and friends as a dessert or for tea with lightly whipped cream. In Zimbabwe clementines are known as *naartjies*, which is an Afrikaans word from neighbouring South Africa. It is a fruit that is grown in profusion in the Mazowe citrus estates close to Harare. It is ideal as a flourless cake for Passover with baking powder omitted\*. For a festive touch I scatter glistening slices of candied clementine on the top or simply dust with icing sugar.

4-5 whole clementines  
250g (9oz) caster (superfine) sugar  
6 eggs, separated  
250g (9oz) almonds, blanched and finely ground  
1 heaped tsp baking powder  
large pinch of saffron threads

### ***For the syrup:***

1 cup freshly squeezed clementine juice  
2 tbsp caster sugar

### ***For greasing:***

1 tbsp soft unsalted butter

### ***For dusting:***

icing (confectioner's) sugar

### ***For candied clementines:***

4 clementines  
140g (5oz) caster sugar 140ml (1/4pt) water

**Prepare** the clementines: Put the unpeeled clementines in a pan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat and simmer for about 2 hours or until tender. Remove the clementines from the pan and discard the liquid. When the clementines have cooled, cut them open and discard the pips. Place in a clean tea towel and squeeze to remove all excess liquid, reserving 1 cup for the syrup. Whiz the cooked clementines in a food processor until smooth.

**Prepare** the syrup: Heat the clementine juice with the caster sugar in a small pan over a medium-high heat. Stir occasionally until the syrup thickens. Pour into a serving jug.

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F). Lightly grease the base and sides of a 23cm (9in) spring-form cake pan. Cut out a circle of baking paper and line the base.

**Make** the cake: In the bowl of a free-standing electric mixer, beat the sugar and egg yolks at high speed until pale and creamy. In a separate bowl combine the ground almonds, baking powder and saffron threads and fold gently into the egg and sugar mixture. Fold in the puréed clementines.

**Beat** egg whites in a clean bowl with the whisk attachment, until stiff peaks form. Then, in two batches, gently fold in the egg whites into the mixture using a large metal spoon, until incorporated. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan.

**Bake** for 45-60 minutes or until the top is golden brown and a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Let the cake cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Then invert onto the wire rack to cool completely. When cold, transfer to a serving plate. At this point make the candied clementine slices or dust with sifted icing sugar.

**Make** the candied clementine slices: Slice the clementines to a 5mm (1/4in) thickness. Place the sugar and water into a small pan over a medium heat and simmer, stirring constantly, to dissolve the sugar. Immerse the clementine slices and bring the syrup to a boil. Cut a circle of baking paper to fit in the pan to keep the fruit submerged for 30 minutes until the slices are glossy and translucent. Remove with a slotted spoon and cool on top of baking paper. Arrange the clementine slices, slightly overlapping, on the outer edge of the cake.

**Serve** a slice of the cake, spooning over a little of the syrup together with lightly whipped cream or Greek yoghurt.

***Stella's Hints:***

- \* You can substitute clementines with tangerines or mandarins.
- \* To get the lining for the base of the cake tin just right, lay the cake tin on a sheet of baking paper and trace an outline. Cut it to fit snugly in the base of the tin.
- \* \*For the Passover add 1 extra egg white and omit the baking powder.