MICH TURNER™

LITTLE VENICE CAKE COMPANY

TART • CAKE RECIPES

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tips, tricks & how to's
from Mich Turner

Hi, I'm Mich Turner and as a qualified food scientist and founder of Little Venice Cake Company, I have been baking for Celebrities and Royalty for over 30 years.

With my range of Little Venice Cake Company tools and bakeware, culinary expertise and innovative recipes I'd like to welcome you to the world of baking.

Whether you are a beginner wanting to learn how to bake, or a more experienced baker looking for enticing recipes and top tips to elevate your bakes, I will expertly guide you through your baking journey so you can Have Your Cake and Eat It!

Igniting all the senses, thoughts and emotions, baking is the ultimate mood booster, building confidence, happiness and social harmony.

Sharing these kitchen skills, together we will create a feast for the eyes and a memory for the palate.

I can't wait for you to join this baking community and look forward to being a part of your journey as we create Everyday Bakes and Showstopper Cakes.

Lemon Meringue Tart

My earliest memory of Lemon meringue tart is visiting my aunt as a small child. She would make the most pillowy, super fluffy meringue. To ensure the meringue is safe, I have made this with Italian meringue – the egg whites are cooked with a hot sugar syrup. The blowtorch effect caramelises the sugar and creates the toasted flavor and finish.

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE LEMON MERINGUE TART BASE

- 200g digestive biscuits (Graham crackers)
- 100g unsalted butter (melted)
- 50g soft brown sugar

LEMON FILLING

- 350ml water
- 200g golden caster sugar
- 3tbsp corn flour (30g)
- 6 large egg yolks
- Pinch salt
- 60g unsalted butter
- 175ml freshly squeezed lemon juice (4 lemons)
- 1tbsp lemon zest (2 lemons)

ITALIAN MERINGUE

- 6 large egg whites
- 300g caster sugar
- 25g glucose syrup
- 65ml water

TIP

The harder you press here, the easier it will be to remove and slice the tart.

INSTRUCTIONS:

LEMON MERINGUE TART BASE

1. Preheat the oven to 356°F(180°C) fan. Blitz together the ingredients for the crust until they come together as a wet sand.
2. Tip into the pie dish and press to fill the base and sides evenly with no gaps
3. Bake for 10-15 minutes until set and toasted. Allow to cool. Meanwhile make the filling.

LEMON FILLING

1. Measure the water, sugar, cornflour, egg yolks and salt into a large saucepan and whisk together continuously over a medium heat until the mixture thickens, and boils for 2 minutes.
2. Remove from the heat, stir in the butter until melted and then whisk in the lemon juice.
3. Pour the lemon mixture through a sieve and stir in the lemon zest.
4. Place the tart tin on a large baking tray and pour the lemon mixture into the shell. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes to set then remove from the oven and cool on a wire rack.
5. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight, covered in cling wrap.

ITALIAN MERINGUE

1. Measure the sugar, glucose and water into a saucepan and heat over medium- high heat, stirring gently.
2. Place the sugar thermometer in the sugar solution and stop stirring when the solution reaches 176°F(80°C).
3. Continue heating without stirring until the temperature reaches 230°F(110°C).
4. Have the egg whites in a clean bowl attached to an electric whisk and start whisking on full speed.
5. As the syrup reaches 246°F(119°C) remove the pan from the heat and, with the egg whites still on full speed add the syrup to the egg whites in a slow, steady stream.
6. Once all the syrup has been added, continue whisking until the meringue has cooled to room temperature – it will thicken, be wonderfully glossy, white and stiff.

ASSEMBLE:

1. Remove the lemon tart from the fridge and carefully lift the tart out of the tin and from the base, sliding it onto a serving plate.
2. Use a metal spoon to pile the meringue on top – carefully taking it to the edges. Swirl with the back of the spoon to create the textures and shapes.
3. Toast the meringue with a blowtorch.
4. The tart can be stored, uncovered in the fridge. Use a sharp knife dipped in hot water when slicing.

Blueberry Almond Frangipane Tart

This is one of my go-to recipes for family and friends.
The sweet shortcrust pastry case is lined with fruit jam, topped with a soft almond filling and studded with fresh blueberries and flaked almonds.
Its simple sophistication is satisfying on every level.

INGREDIENTS:

PASTRY

- 225g plain flour
- pinch salt
- 120g fridge cold butter cut into 1cm cubes
- 2tbsp icing sugar
- zest 1 lemon
- 1 egg yolk + 2tbsp very cold water

FILLING

- 85g unsalted butter
- 175g caster sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 85g ground almonds
- 1tsp almond extract
- 95g self-raising flour
- 250g blueberry jam (variations – try strawberry or raspberry)
- 60g chopped or flaked almonds for the topping
- 4tbsp icing sugar
- 1 lemon juiced

INSTRUCTIONS:

PASTRY

1. Put the flour and salt in a food processor and add the butter. Pulse until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the icing sugar and lemon zest and pulse briefly.
2. Beat the egg yolk and water together and add, pulse to a rough dough and the pastry has just come together. Tip the pastry out and knead lightly to bring everything together. Wrap in clingwrap and rest in the fridge for 30 mins. This will help prevent the crust from shrinking when baking.
3. Knead the pastry gently on a clean work surface dusted lightly with flour, and roll out to a thickness of 4mm and just large enough to cover the base and sides of the tin. Lift the pastry with the rolling pin, and lay over the tin. Carefully press to fit the base and sides. Do not trim the top yet, rest for another 20 mins in the fridge or freezer before trimming with scissors or a sharp knife. Line with baking parchment and fill with ceramic baking beans.
4. Blind bake in a preheated oven at 338°F(170°C) fan for 15 mins. Meanwhile, make the frangipane by creaming together the softened butter and sugar. Beat in the eggs until well mixed before stirring in the ground almonds, sifted flour and almond extract. Fill a large piping bag (with no nozzle) with the frangipane – this makes it easier to fill the tart.

FILLING

1. After 15 mins, remove the pastry case from the oven, remove the ceramic beans and the baking parchment. Spread the base with the jam, pipe the almond frangipan over the top working form the outside in and gently smooth to the edges with a palette knife.
2. Scatter the blueberries and flaked almonds evenly over the surface and gently press down. Return to the oven and bake for 40-45 mins until the crust is a golden brown and the middle is set.

While the tart is in the oven, mix together icing sugar with lemon juice until dissolved. Remove the baked tart from the oven and set on a wire rack to cool. Brush the lemon syrup over pie as it comes out of the oven using a pastry brush.

The Frangipane should be stored at room temperature for up to 5 days. Can be frozen.

Tomato, Parmesan & Basil Tart

Tomato, Parmesan and Basil – the perfect combination for this simple, rustic, savoury tart – for family, friends, picnics and parties. The pastry can be made up to 2 days in advance and stored in the fridge until needed. Roasting the tomatoes beforehand concentrates the flavor and softens the texture.

INGREDIENTS:

- 400g cherry tomatoes – left whole
- 2tbsp olive oil + extra to serve
- 50g parmesan (or grated mature cheddar)
- 2 large eggs
- 300ml heavy cream
- 1tbsp Dijon mustard (optional)
- 30g torn basil leaves (save a small handful to serve)

PASTRY

- 280g plain flour – plus extra for dusting
- 140g cold unsalted butter – cubed
- Iced water (4-6 tbsp approx. 125ml)
- Salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. To make the pastry, rub the butter into the flour until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Season with salt and pepper. Add 4-6 tbsp iced cold water – just enough to bring the pastry together. Wrap in cling film and allow to rest in the fridge for 1 hour or up to 2 days. Resting the pastry help prevent shrinkage during baking.
2. When ready to use, remove from the fridge10 mins before rolling the pastry out on a lightly floured surface just larger than the base and sides of the LITTLE VENICE CAKE COMPANY TART TIN. The tin does not need to be greased as there is enough butter in the pastry to prevent is sticking.
3. Use the rolling pin to lift the pastry up and over the tin and gently press the pastry into the base and sides of the tin. Trim with a pair of kitchen scissors so there is a 1cm overhang all the way round. Freeze for 10 mins to firm. Preheat the oven to 356°F(180°C).
4. Place the cherry tomatoes (left whole) in a small roasting tray and drizzle with the olive oil, salt and pepper.
5. Remove the pastry case from the freezer, prick the base with a fork, line with baking paper, fill with baking beans and blind bake in the oven on the top shelf with the tomatoes on the bottom shelf for 20 mins.
6. Remove the tomatoes and set aside to cool. Remove the pastry case from the oven, use the baking paper to carefully lift the beans out, then return the pastry case to the oven continue to cook for 5-10 mins until golden brown.
7. Meanwhile, place the eggs in a jug with the heavy cream and mustard and blend together with a stick blender to create a smooth batter. Stir int the basil and season generously with pepper and a pinch of salt.
8. Remove the pastry case from the oven, set on a large baking tray and sprinkle half the cheese over the base of the pastry case. Spoon the tomatoes evenly on top. Pour over the basil cream and sprinkle the rest of the cheese on top.
9. Bake for 25-30 mins until set and golden brown. Leave to cool in the tin.
10. Lift out of the tin, drizzle with olive oil and the remaining basil leaves Serve with a fresh green herb salad.

This tart is best eaten on the day.

Ultimate Carrot Cake with cream cheese frosting

This is the recipe I created for the wedding of Pierce Brosnan and Keely Shaye Smith. It is wonderfully moist, with a delicious blend of carrots, fruit and spices. Because the cake is made with sunflower oil it is naturally dairy free and can be served chilled. I have decorated it here with a velvet soft cream cheese frosting and caramelised walnut praline for added flavour, texture, sweetness and crunch.

- *Please note the frosting is not dairy free*
- *For one 8 inch round cake*
  All ingredients with the exception of the cream cheese should be at room temperature.
  The cream cheese frosting will be lower in fat than a buttercream.
  Butter is 80% fat, whereas as full fat cream cheese is 30% fat.

INGREDIENTS:

CAKE

- 300ml sunflower oil
- 4 large eggs
- 150g golden caster sugar
- 150g light brown sugar
- 350g plain flour
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1tbsp cinnamon
- 2tsp nutmeg
- 40g stem ginger
- 2 orange zest
- 2 lemon zest
- 100g walnuts (chopped)
- 100g desiccated coconut
- 200g sultanas soaked in 50ml rum for 1 hour
- 350g carrots, peeled and grated

SYRUP

- 150g light brown sugar
- juice of 2 lemon
- juice of 2 orange

WALNUT PRALINE

- 100g walnuts – roughly chopped
- 150g caster sugar

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

- 225g full fat cream cheese
- 300ml heavy cream
- 150g powdered sugar
- 2tsp vanilla bean paste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Set oven to 320°F(160°C)and line the base and sides of 2 qty 8 inch diameter cake tins with non stick baking parchment.
2. Blend together the eggs, oil and sugar until well mixed. In a separate bowl sieve together the flour, spices and baking soda and stir into the oil mixture to create a smooth batter.
3. Add all the remaining ingredients until well mixed and divide equally between the two prepared cake tins. Bake for 1 hour until well risen, golden brown and a knife inserted in the centre comes out clean. As soon as the cake is in the oven, prepare the syrup. Measure the ingredients into a jug and stir until dissolved.
4. As soon as the cake is baked, place it on a wire rack, spike over the entire cake with a wooden skewer and pour all of the syrup evenly over both cakes. Allow the cakes to completely cool in the tins, then cover the cake and tin with cling wrap and chill completely in the refrigerator.
5. To make the cream cheese frosting, place all ingredients into a desktop mixer fitted with a whisk attachment and whisk until thick and firm. Adjust the vanilla to taste.
6. To make the praline, place the roughly chopped walnuts on a baking sheet in the oven for 15 minutes until roasted. Remove and allow to cool slightly. Place the sugar in a non stick frying pan over a moderate to high heat until the sugar melts and turns a warm caramel color (do not stir it at all – simply swirl the pan). Remove from the heat and pour the caramel over the walnuts. Allow to cool and set, then chop with a large knife into small bite size pieces.
7. When you are ready to assemble, remove the chilled cakes from the tins and place one cake on a cake board or cake stand. Level if necessary. Spread generously with a third of the cream cheese frosting and scatter with walnut praline. Place the top tier in position and spread the remaining cream cheese frosting on the top and sides of the cake. Level the sides and decorate the top with the remaining walnut praline.

- *This cake can be stored for up to 7 days in the refrigerator.*
  Serve at room temperature.
- *VARIATIONS*
  Replace 1 tbsp vanilla bean paste with 1tbsp fresh orange zest for orange cream cheese frosting.
- *Use a dairy free buttercream made from plant based butter and icing sugar flavored with fresh orange zest for a dairy-free cake.*

Super Moist Soft Chocolate Cake

This is an alternative moist soft chocolate cake to our chocolate truffle torte. It is soft and very chocolatey. It can be split and layered with fresh creams, chocolate mascarpone cream, salted caramel or buttercreams. Adding nut pralines and sliced fruits will give you many options to enjoy this cake.

INGREDIENTS:

- 200g plain flour
- 60g cocoa powder
- 1 ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- ¾ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 200ml buttermilk
- 170g golden caster sugar
- 170g soft brown sugar
- 130ml sunflower oil
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 shot espresso topped up to 200ml with boiling water (or 1 heaped tsp coffee granules with boiling water)

If you would prefer not to use coffee, substitute with boiling water and 2tsp vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 338°F(170°C) fan and line the base and sides of 2 qty 8 inch round cake tins with non stick baking parchment .
2. Sieve all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl.
3. In a separate bowl combine the buttermilk, sunflower oil, egg, vanilla, espresso.
4. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients using a hand balloon whisk to a smooth batter. Allow to stand for 2 minutes to thicken, then divide the batter evenly between the tins. (the drop weight for each tin should be circa 625g)
5. Bake in the oven for 30 -35 minutes until risen and set.
6. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the tins for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool.
7. Remove the cakes, wrap carefully in cling wrap and chill until ready to fill.

When you are ready to assemble the cake, either simply sandwich these cakes with your favourite filling and frosting , decorate and serve; or split each cake in half horizontally with a cake blade or large serrated knife and build the layers on a cake board or your favourite cake stand with creams, pralines, fruits or caramels.
For a professional, spectacular finish, use a palette knife to cover the top and sides with additional creams and smooth with the side scraper. Chill to firm. Repeat if necessary to achieve a smooth finish. Decorate with hand piped cream, fruits, nuts, truffles and macaron to serve.

These cake bases can be made in advance and frozen until required. Defrost in the fridge for 6 hours or overnight to handle.
Always serve at room temperature.

Orange Raspberry Ombre Cake

Fruity and fabulous – this cake is delicious and will showcase your hand piping skills. Impressive, yet achievable. You can vary the flavored for different occasions.

INGREDIENTS:

ORANGE CAKE

- 300g unsalted butter softened
- 300g golden caster sugar
- 5 large eggs at room temperature – beaten
- 2tsp vanilla extract
- 300g self raising flour – sieved
- 2 oranges- zest
- 1 lemon – zest
- optional 50g chopped pistachios
- 60ml fresh milk – room temperature or slightly warmed

SYRUP

- 150g golden caster sugar
- 150ml fresh orange and lemon juice

SWISS MERINGUE BUTTERCREAM

- 400g Caster sugar
- 225ml Egg white
- 2 tbsp Vanilla bean paste
- 500g Unsalted butter
- 4 tbsp Freeze dried raspberry powder
- 150g Seedless raspberry jam
- 200g Fresh raspberries

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Line the base and sides of 2 qty inch round cake tin with baking paper. Set the oven to 338°F(170°C) fan.
2. In a desktop mixer, stir the orange and lemon zest into the sugar. This helps to draw out the oils and enhances the flavor. Add the softened butter and cream together until light and soft.
3. Reduce the speed to medium and add the beaten egg and vanilla extract in a slow trickle, beating well.
4. Sieve in the flour and fold through until fully mixed. Stir in the chopped pistachios. Divide equally between the two tins (approx. 625g each) and level with the back of a spoon.
5. Bake in the oven for 30 mins until the cake is well risen, golden brown, the top gently springs back when pressed lightly, and a knife inserted in the centre comes out clean. As soon as the cake is in the oven, make the syrup by stirring together the sugar and citrus juices in a jug. Sieve to remove any flesh and pips. Set aside.
6. Remove the cakes from the oven and place on a wire rack. Pierce the top of each cake all over with a wooden skewer and pour the citrus syrup evenly over, using a pastry brush to help. The cakes will soak up the syrup as they cool and will ensure the cakes are wonderfully moist.
7. Leave the cakes to cool, then remove from the tin and wrap in cling wrap and refrigerate until firm and ready to assemble.

SWISS MERINGUE BUTTERCREAM

1. Place the egg whites and sugar in a large, clean heatproof bowl and place over a pan of gently simmering water. Stir with the thermometer spatula until the sugar dissolves and the temperature reaches142-158°F(61-70°C). This will take about 10 minutes.
2. Remove from the heat and transfer to a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Whisk the meringue until it has thickened, tripled in size and cooled to room temperature.
3. Change the whisk attachment for the beater and add the butter in small batches until thickened and stable. The mixture will loosen before it comes together so be patient. Add the vanilla bean paste and mix until fully incorporated.
4. Divide the buttercream between 2 bowls and add the raspberry powder to one half. Stir and allow to absorb for 20 mins before using. If the buttercream looks a little thick, add enough seedless raspberry jam to soften.
5. Remove the cakes from the fridge, trim to level if necessary and cut each in half horizontally.
6. Place one cake on a board or stand and spread with raspberry buttercream. Spoon and swirl 1/3 raspberry jam on the top and scatter with 1/3 fresh raspberries. Press the raspberries down into the buttercream.
7. Repeat with the next 2 cakes and then place the last cake on top.
8. Spread a very thin coat of raspberry buttercream on the top and sides of the cake to level and then chill to firm.
9. Fill a piping bag with an open rose nozzle and the remainder of the raspberry buttercream.
10. Pipe a ring of buttercream roses around the base of the cake.
11. Transfer all the remaining raspberry buttercream into the bowl and add 1/3 of the vanilla buttercream. Stir to create a paler shade. Fill the same piping bag and nozzle with this paler buttercream a middle ring of buttercream roses around the cake.
12. Repeat this process 2 more times with the remaining vanilla buttercream for a top ring of roses around the side of the cake, then fill the top of the cake with the palest, remaining buttercream. Serve.

The cake can be stored uncovered in the fridge but should be served at room temperature.

Chocolate Ganache Torte

This is the ultimate chocolate torte, made with melted chocolate and ground almonds for a decadent, indulgent and sophisticated chocolate truffle texture. Tried and tested, this has been the base for many a Royal and Celebrity birthday and wedding.

TOP TIP

It is very tempting and easy to overbake this cake – the secret is to remove it from the oven while it still has a definite wobble. The cake will firm as it chills and will have a wonderful truffle texture. Look for the crust and wobble, rather than a clean knife test.

INGREDIENTS:

CHOCOLATE TORTE

- 250g unsalted butter softened
- 350g soft brown sugar
- 5 large eggs at room temperature – beaten
- 2tsp vanilla extract
- 200g chocolate (62-70% cocoa solids) melted and cooled
- 70g plain flour
- 70g ground almonds
- (optional grated zest 2 oranges)

CHOCOLATE GANACHE

- 125ml heavy cream
- 250g unsalted butter – cubed
- 500g dark chocolate (62-70% cocoa solids) broken into pieces

CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM

- 125g unsalted butter – softened
- 250g powdered sugar
- 2tsp vanilla extract
- 200g chocolate ganache from recipe above (cooled)

INSTRUCTIONS:

CHOCOLATE TORTE

1. Line the base and sides of 2 qty 8 inch round cake tins with baking parchment. Set the oven to 302°F(150°C) fan.
2. In a desktop mixer, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Reduce the speed to medium and add the egg and vanilla extract in a slow trickle, beating well.
4. Pour in the melted chocolate and stir through until smooth. (if adding the orange zest, stir it in here)
5. Sieve in the flour and ground almonds and fold through until fully mixed. Divide the mixture evenly between the tins and bake in the oven for 25-30 mins.
6. The cakes will have risen with a crust and a slight wobble. Remove the cake from the oven and transfer to a wire rack to tool in the tin.
7. Wrap the cooled cake, still in the tin, in cling wrap and refrigerate until chilled or needed as this will make the cake easier to handle.

CHOCOLATE GANACHE

1. Place the cubed butter and broken chocolate in a large heatproof bowl over a pan of water and heat until just melted.
2. In a separate saucepan bring the cream just to the boil. Remove from the heat and pour over the chocolate and butter. Stir until full melted, glossy and smooth. Allow to cool.

CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM

1. Beat together the butter, icing sugar and vanilla until light. Add the chocolate ganache and beat gently until fully mixed and smooth.

TO COVER

2. Remove the chilled cakes from the tins. The cake should have settled and levelled in the tins. Trim the outer crust to level, if necessary. Place one cake on a cake board the same size as the cake and spread the top with the buttercream using a palette knife. Place the second cake upside down on top. Spread the sides and top with buttercream and use the palette knife and side scraper to level. Don't worry too much if there are a few crumbs and pieces – the buttercream will hold everything in place.
3. Return the cake to the fridge to firm. (you can repeat this process to ensure a super smooth top and sides if necessary).
4. Meanwhile warm the ganache in a bowl over a pan of simmering water until fluid and shiny.
5. Remove the chilled and firm cake from the fridge and place on a wire rack over a sheet of baking parchment.
6. Starting in the center, pour the warmed (not hot) ganache over the top and sides and then use a silicone spatula to encourage this over the top and down the sides of the cake. Patch any gaps, then carefully hold the cooling rack and tap it down on the worktop to level and smooth the ganache.
7. Allow to settle for a few minutes then carefully lift the cake on its board from the rack, remove any drips from beneath the cake board with a small sharp knife and place the cake on a presentation board or cake stand.
8. Gather up all the remaining chocolate ganache and buttercream and carefully mix together. Allow to cool and stir to a piping consistency. Fill a piping bag with a suitable nozzle and decorate the top of the cake with hand piped swirls and leaves. Dress with fresh strawberries and macaron and serve.

This cake will keep for up to 3 days at room temperature. It can be chilled, but should always be enjoyed at room temperature.

TOP TIP

For a 'drip cake' ensure the cake top and sides are beautifully level and smooth – repeat the buttercream process a couple of times, refrigerating between each coat to achieve a professional finish.

Fill a piping bag with a small plain nozzle, or a piping bottle with the molten ganache. Pipe around the outer edge of the cake with a controlled drip down over the sides. Fill in the center of the cake with the ganache and a palette knife. Decorate as desired.