

victoria sponge

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Victoria Sponge

Two layers of butter cake with jam and cream between them, named for a queen who took a slice with afternoon tea. It is not a sponge in the technical sense at all — a true sponge is foamed egg with little or no fat — but a creamed butter cake, and it is the standard by which the creaming method is taught in Britain.

The recipe is famously a ratio rather than a list: equal weights of butter, sugar, egg and self-raising flour. Weigh the eggs, then match everything else to them.

What makes it work

- **Weigh the eggs in their shells and use that number four times.** Four medium eggs come to about 225 g, which is why the classic recipe reads 8 oz of everything. This is the oldest baker's percentage in English cooking; see [baker's percentages](#).
- **Cream for a full four minutes.** The air beaten into the butter is a third of the lift; the raising agent only expands bubbles that already exist. See [baking fats](#).
- **Add the eggs slowly, and warm.** Cold egg into creamed butter curdles the emulsion, and a curdled batter bakes heavy. A spoonful of the flour rescues it.
- **Fold the flour, do not beat it.** Every extra turn develops [gluten](#) and costs tenderness.
- **Two tins, not one deep one.** A Victoria is defined by the ratio of crumb to filling, and a split deep cake never has flat enough faces.

Ingredients

Two 20 cm tins. Serves 10.

- 225 g unsalted butter, softened
- 225 g caster sugar
- 4 [eggs](#), about 225 g, at room temperature
- 225 g self-raising flour, or plain flour with 10 g baking powder
- 3 g fine salt
- 2 tbsp [milk](#), if needed

Filling:

- 200 g raspberry or strawberry jam — see [Fruit Jellies Jam Jellies Butters](#)
- 300 ml double cream, whipped, or 200 g vanilla buttercream
- caster sugar, to dust

Method

Butter and line two 20 cm tins. Heat the oven to **180 °C / 350 °F**.

Cream the butter and sugar four minutes until visibly pale and increased in volume. Beat in the eggs one at a time, adding a tablespoon of the flour with each after the first.

Sift in the remaining flour and the salt and fold with a spatula until just combined. The batter should drop reluctantly from the spoon; loosen with milk if it does not.

Divide by weight between the tins — actually weigh them, or the layers will not match — and level. Bake **20–25 minutes**, until risen, golden, and springing back when pressed.

Cool five minutes in the tin, then turn out. Cool completely before filling: jam on the bottom layer, cream over it, second layer on top, sugar dusted over.

Notes

- **Jam first, cream second, always.** Cream against the jam is a slip plane; jam against the crumb soaks in slightly and holds.

- The Women's Institute rules for a competition Victoria specify jam only, no cream, and no dusting on the outside. Nobody at home follows this.
- **Eats best on the day.** Unfilled layers freeze for three months.

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