



sharing our Greek culinary heritage

Sofia's Vasilopita

For the Vasilopita

You will need...

375g white sugar
6 x 65g eggs at room temperature
250g unsalted butter, melted
110ml milk
1 teaspoon bicarbonate soda
180ml freshly squeezed orange juice (juice from 1 orange)
15g vanillin sugar
½ teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon cinnamon
10-15ml brandy, cognac or rum
zest of one orange, finely grated
675g self-raising flour, sifted
100g walnuts, coarsely chopped
100g sultanas
100g glacé cherries, quartered
1 small coin
Baking paper

Preparing the Vasilopita

- Beat the sugar with the eggs with either a hand-held or stand-up mixer, until the mixture is pale - approximately 4 minutes
- Slowly add all but a small amount of the melted butter and mix in well (reserve the remaining butter to baste the cake tin)
- Slowly add the milk and mix in well
- Ensure the orange juice is in a tall glass

- Over the mixing bowl, add the bicarbonate soda to the orange juice and mix these well, before adding them to the cake mixture
- While continuing to beat the ingredients, add the vanillin sugar, ground cloves, cinnamon, brandy and the orange zest
- Add the flour, one spoonful at a time, while continuing to beat the cake mixture
- Reserve one spoonful of the flour
- Place the walnuts, sultanas, glacé cherries and reserved flour in a bowl and stir them thoroughly, ensuring all the pieces are coated in flour
- Add these ingredients to the cake mixture and continue to beat the mixture till all the fruit and nut pieces are dispersed through the cake batter
- Wash, dry and wrap a small coin in baking paper; add this to the cake mixture and mix the batter well
- Baste the base and side of a spring-form pan (approximately 25cm diameter and 7.5cm depth) with the reserved butter
- Line the cake pan with baking paper and baste that as well
- Pour the cake mixture into the pan and tap the pan on its sides and base to spread the mixture evenly in the pan

Baking the Vasilopita

- Place the cake pan in a fan-forced oven preheated to 160°C
- Do not open the oven door for the first hour
- After the cake has baked for an hour, insert a long skewer into the centre of the cake through a natural crack in the surface of the cake. If the skewer comes out with uncooked batter on it, return the cake to the oven and bake it for another 5-10 minutes. Check the cake once again with a new skewer. When the skewer comes out clean or lightly crumbed, remove the cake from the oven and allow it to cool for 10 minutes in the pan
- Carefully remove the cake from the pan, peel away the baking paper from the base of the cake and cool it further on a cake rack
- Once the cake has completely cooled, decorate it with a generous dusting of icing sugar and using pomegranate arils or toasted almond slivers or flakes, write the letter X and Π, which stand for Χρόνια Πολλά, on the top

Serving the Vasilopita

- Serve the Vasilopita at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Day or during your celebration later that day
- Traditionally the first slice is reserved for Jesus and the second for the family home where the celebration is taking place
- The following piece is served to the eldest person at the gathering. Continuing on, the next eldest is served and so on
- The person lucky enough to find the coin in their slice of cake is said to have prosperity and good fortune all through the New Year

Key Points

- It's important to thoroughly coat the walnuts, sultanas and glacé cherries in flour before adding them to the cake batter, so they spread more easily and evenly through the cake batter; otherwise they will clump together and it will be hard to separate them
- It's also important to use a small, light coin, so that it doesn't settle on the bottom of the cake when baking and can't be seen when transferring the cake from the tin to the cooling rack or from the cooling rack to the serving plate
- Wet and drain the pomegranate arils so that they stick to the icing sugar when placed on the cake