

## *Christmas Fruitcake*

### **INGREDIENTS:**

- *Dried Fruits – chopped – 3 cup*
- *Dark Rum – 1½ cup*
- *Nuts – coarsely chopped – 1 cup*
- *All-purpose Flour – 2 cup*
- *Baking Powder – 1¼ teaspoon*
- *Baking Soda – ½ teaspoon*
- *Caster Sugar – 1¼ cup*
- *Unsalted Butter – 250 grams (1 cup + 2 tablespoons at room temperature)*
- *Eggs – 4 (room temperature)*
- *Vanilla Extract – 2 teaspoon*
- *Jam/Fruit Preserve – 1 tablespoon*
- *Cloves – 2*
- *Cardamom – 2*
- *Cinnamon – small piece*
- *Nutmeg – small piece*



### For Caramel:

- *Granulated White Sugar – ½ cup*
- *Warm Water – ¼ cup*

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- *Use a combination of dried fruits – sultanas, raisins, dried cranberries, apricot, blueberries and cherries and candied papaya. The candied fruits (papaya) should be rinsed first to remove the sticky glaze. Chop the fruits into small pieces. Soak the fruits in the dark rum and store in an airtight jar. The fruits should be soaked in rum for at least one week. (You can soak it for weeks or months or even up to a year.) Shake the jar of soaked fruits once in a while.*
- *On the day of baking the fruitcake, drain the soaked fruits and keep aside. Retain 4 tablespoons from the drained liquor.*
- *To prepare the caramel, heat the sugar and 1 tablespoon of water in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Let the sugar melt. When the sugar becomes a dark caramel, remove the pan from heat. Add warm water to this. (Be very careful at this stage since the water tends to splash and can cause serious burns.) Bring the saucepan back to the heat and boil for a few minutes. Remove from the heat and let the caramel cool to room temperature. (The caramel mixture can be prepared in*

advance and stored in the refrigerator. Bring it to room temperature before using in the cake batter.)

- Use a combination of nuts – walnuts, pecans, cashew nuts, pistachios and almonds. Coarsely chop the nuts and mix them with the drained fruits. Toss the fruits and nuts mixture in 1 – 2 tablespoon of flour. (This will keep them from sticking together and prevent them from sinking to the bottom of the cake)
- Preheat the oven to 180° C for 10 – 15 minutes. Butter and line a 9 inch round pan and a 9 inch loaf pan with baking paper.
- Separate the egg whites and the yolks.
- Grind the cloves, cardamom, cinnamon and nutmeg with a pinch of sugar to a fine powder.
- In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and baking soda.
- In an electric mixer or using a hand mixer, beat the egg yolks and the butter until smooth and creamy. Add the sugar to this gradually and beat well until the mixture becomes smooth. Add the vanilla extract, cooled caramel and spice powder and beat well until incorporated.
- Add the flour in 2 batches and beat well after each addition. Add the jam/fruit preserve (I use black currant/raspberry jam) to this mixture and combine well.
- In another clean and dry bowl (and clean set of whisks in the mixer) beat the egg whites until it becomes foamy and reaches the soft peaks form. Gently fold the egg whites to the cake batter in 2 batches. Fold in well until there are no white streaks visible.
- Fold in the fruits and nuts to the cake batter.
- Add the liquor retained after draining the fruits and mix well. (You can add about 1 – 4 tablespoon of liquor to suit your taste. If you do not like the extra rum flavor, you may skip this step.)
- Pour the batter into the prepared baking pans and bake in the oven. If the top of the cake begins to brown faster, cover it loosely with aluminium foil. Bake for 45 – 55 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean.
- Remove the cakes from the oven and let it cool in the pan for 10 – 15 minutes. Transfer it to a wire rack and cool completely.
- Smaller cakes can be baked in 30 – 40 minutes.
- The cakes can be stored wrapped in plastic wrap and aluminium foil. Brush a little rum onto the cake every few days to enhance the flavor.

