

Scarf Lady cake

For the cake:

400g unsalted butter (room temp)
400g caster sugar
8 eggs
2tsp vanilla extract
400g self-raising flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder

For the buttercream:

150g unsalted butter (softened)
300g icing sugar, sifted
milk, to loosen

300g light brown fondant

White fondant and food gel colouring, or different coloured fondants, for Scarf lady and wool balls

1. Preheat the oven to fan 180°C. Grease and double-line the base and sides of 2 x 20cm deep cake tins.
2. Using electric beaters or a freestanding mixer, beat together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. In a separate bowl, crack the eggs and whisk together with a fork. Slowly add the eggs to the butter and sugar mixture, with the vanilla extract.
3. Sift together the flour and baking powder, then add to the egg mixture, using a spatula to scrape down the sides of the bowl to make sure it is well combined.
4. Bake for 40-50 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean. Leave to cool in their tins for 10 minutes before turning out onto wire racks to cool completely.
5. To make the buttercream, whisk the butter until light (using an electric hand whisk or a freestanding mixer). Slowly add the icing sugar, loosening with milk, until light and fluffy.
6. When the cakes are cool, use a serrated knife to level the tops, then slice each one in half. Sandwich all four halves together using jam, and secure to a cake board using a bit of buttercream. Spread a thin layer of buttercream over the outside of the cake and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
7. Roll out the light brown fondant to 3mm thickness in a large rectangle then use a knife to cut 1-1.5cm wide strips from the length of it. Roll out more fondant and cut this into shorter strips of the same thickness. Lay the shorter strips on a flat surface at 2cm intervals then weave the long strips under and over, alternating the pattern so that you end up with a basket weave effect. Carefully wrap this around the outside of the cake. (You may have to do this in three sections so that the fondant doesn't become over-stretched). Twist any remaining fondant into a loose braid to make a knot at the front of the basket and secure this to the cake.
8. Roll out a circle of coloured fondant to lay on top of the cake, to be the base of Scarf Lady's wool basket.
9. Use different coloured fondants to make a miniature Scarf Lady to sit on top of the basket, then wrap strings/sausages of different shades of fondant around balls of fondant to make edible wool balls, then sit these in the basket.