



I read some article titled something daft like "Top 10 scariest foods". Coconut was in the top 10. That's how daft the list was. And still I read it. Anyway liquorice was also on the list and I have always been curious about how some people can really hate liquorice. I think liquorice tastes great. I love [chocolate](#) but I think liquorice is addictive. I don't eat that much of it because, believe it or not [it is possible to overdose on liquorice](#) (in moderation though it's quite good for you), and also it's hard to find the good stuff. So it can be lethal, some people hate it as much as marmite, and it's oh-so-darkly sweet. I decided I had to add a recipe for liquorice cake for Halloween.

I knew exactly what I wanted - a liquorice cake with tangy raspberry icing. A couple of years ago I started writing a children's book and then halfway through I realised whatever it was I was writing it wasn't really for kids nor was it for adults - it was something I found fun but I wasn't sure who else would enjoy it. Anyway at one point one of the characters ask for a slice of liquorice cake with tangy raspberry icing ([here's an excerpt](#)) and ever since then I've been thinking I'd really love to try that.

Oh yeah, the raspberry butter cream went a bit wrong and I ended up with a bloody red mess of a raspberry ganache sort of thing - which I think works very well for Halloween but if you would like something a bit more presentable try this recipe for [raspberry buttercream frosting](#) . I think you'll need to use about twice the quantities for this recipe. I did start off by trying to make that recipe. Where did I go wrong? Um, what did I do right really? Not much. I used a whisk instead of a paddle attachment as the recipe calls for and it seems that actually that does matter, particularly if you're trying to mix in something as bitter as the raspberries with the butter. Basically when I whisked the raspberries into the butter it all separated. I should also say that I don't think I reduced the raspberry sauce anything like as much as I should have. I also added about 150g of icing sugar to it and about 2 tablespoons of fresh lemon juice. I searched for how to fix buttercream frosting and found a site that said if you melt a third of your mixture and then add this back into your mixture. This worked fine until I started whisking - that site did say to use a paddle attachment. That's how I'm pretty sure that whisking your buttercream is not the best idea. So instead I melted the whole mixture over a very gentle heat (takes about 2 minutes, no time at all). I removed it from the heat and kept stirring it to cool it down and keep it smooth. It tasted great but it was very liquid. I should have let it cool down completely but at that stage I just wanted the cake made.



The evolution of a bloody mess... cake



The way I make a Bloody Mess Cake is



Ingredients

For the liquorice cake

- 150g unsalted butter
- 200g golden syrup
- 200g black treacle or crude black strap molasses (*crude molasses is filled with nutrients - great stuff*)
- 125g dark muscovado sugar
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
- 75g 70% dark chocolate, chopped into pieces
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), dissolved in 2 x 15ml tablespoons warm water
- 150ml hot water

- 6 liquorice & cinnamon herbal teabags
- 25 blackjacks (or 10 - 15 aniseed balls)
- 3 tbsp natural yoghurt
- 2 eggs, beaten to mix
- 250g plain flour
- 1 small bottle of natural black food colouring (optional - *unfortunately I'd run out by the time I made the last cake, it works well*)

For the raspberry ganache

- 500g raspberries (fresh or frozen)
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 250g icing sugar
- 227g unsalted butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

For proper raspberry buttercream icing

- [Deep pink raspberry buttercream frosting](#)

Instructions

1. In a measuring jug add the 6 liquorice teabags to 150ml of boiling hot water. Leave for 10 minutes to infuse.

2. Wring out the teabags into the measuring jug, then pour the liquid into the smallest saucepan you have and place over a gently heat. Add the sweets one or two at a time and stir around until they have melted. When all the sweets have melted, take off the heat and leave to cool for 15 minutes or until completely cooled.

3. With a hand whisk, blend in the yoghurt. Then whisk in the eggs and the baking soda.

4. Turn on the oven and preheat the oven to 170°C/gas mark 3.

5. In normal sized saucepan, melt the butter over a gentle heat. Add the sugar, ginger, cinnamon, treacle (or molasses) and golden syrup. Stir around until the sugar has dissolved and everything is nicely blended. Then take off the heat and allow to cool a little, not completely, it still needs to be quite warm but not hot. When it's warm but no longer hot (wouldn't burn you at all) then add in the chopped chocolate and stir around. Blend until smooth. It's important that the mix isn't hot when you add the chocolate because if it is the chocolate will burn and split. Making sure that the mix was the right temperature and everything is blended nicely, taste. *Just because it tastes great...*

6. Whisk in a spoonful of the dark butter-sugar-spice mix into the egg-yoghurt-liquorice mix. Whisk in another couple of spoonful one at a time. By this time the egg mix should be warm enough that it won't curdle if you add it to the warm dark mix. You really don't want the dark mix to be that warm at this stage. Add the two mixes together and whisk till blended.

7. Place the flour in a large bowl. Pour in the dark spicy mix and with an electric whisk blend until smooth.

8. Grease 2 cake tins (and line with baking paper or greased tin foil) and divide the cake mixture between the two tins. You need to leave about 1 inch room at the top because the cake will rise. Bake for about 45 minutes. Every 15 minutes or so turn the tins so that the cakes rise evenly.

9. ***For the ganache:***

- Put the raspberries in a small sauce pan and cook over medium heat stirring with a spoon until they break down into a sauce. Pour the sauce through a metal sieve to take out the seeds and then put the seedless sauce back in the pot and simmer until it reduces to half its volume. Blend in 150g of the icing sugar and the lemon juice. Allow to cool.

- Beat 100g of icing sugar and the vanilla extract into the butter. Add in the raspberry mix. If it separates don't worry. Add the whole mix to the saucepan reduce the heat the lowest setting and stir constantly. Add more icing sugar according to taste. Remove from the heat and keep stirring to ensure it stays smooth. Allow to cool.

If it doesn't separate, feel smug, well done you.

- When the cakes have baked, take out of the oven and allow to cool completely. When cool remove from the tins. Plaster one with the frosting or ganache, then add the other layer of cake and again plaster with the frosting or ganache.

And that's how you get one tasty bloody mess of a cake. Scary.