**Cherry loaf cake**

175g/6oz red or natural glace cherries

225g/8oz Self-raising flour

175g/6oz Softened butter

175g/6oz Caster sugar

Finely grated rind of 1 lemon

50g/20z ground almonds

3 large eggs

**Method**

1 Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees/fan 160/gas 4. Grease a 900g/2lb loaf tin then line the base with baking parchment.

2 Cut the cherries into quarters, put in a sieve and run under cold running water. Drain well then dry thoroughly on kitchen paper.

3 Measure all the remaining ingredients into a large bowl and beat well for 1 minute to mix thoroughly. Lightly fold in the cherries. Turn into the prepared tin.

4 Bake in the pre-heated oven for 1-1hr 15 mins or until well risen, golden brown and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 mins, then turn out, peel off the parchment and finish cooling on a wire rack.

**Easter simnel cake**

100g/4oz red or natural glace cherries

225g/8oz softened butter

225g/8oz light muscovado sugar

4 large eggs

225g/8oz self-raising flour

225g/8oz sultanas

100g/4oz currants

50g/2oz chopped candied peel

Grated rind of 2 lemons

2 level tsp ground mixed spice

For the filling and topping

450g/1 lb marzipan

2 tablespoons apricot jam

 Egg beaten to glaze

Method

 Pre-heat the oven to 150 degrees/fan 130/ Gas 2. Grease a 20cm /8in deep round cake tin then line the base and sides with baking parchment.

Cut cherries into quarters, put in a sieve and rinse under running water. Drain well then dry thoroughly on kitchen paper. Measure all the cake ingredients into a large mixing bowl and beat well until thoroughly blended. Place half the mixture into the prepared tin and level the surface.

Take one third of the marzipan and roll it out into a circle the size of the tin and place on top of the cake mixture. Spoon the remaining cake mixture on top and level the surface.

Bake in pre-heated oven for about 2 ½ hours until well risen, evenly brown and firm to touch. Cover with foil after 1 hour if the top is browning to quickly. Leave to cool in the tin for about 10 minutes then turn out, peel the parchment and finish cooling on a wire rack.

When the cake is cool, brush the top with a little warm apricot jam and roll out half of the remaining marzipan to fit on top. Press firmly on top and crimp the edges to decorate. Mark a criss-cross pattern on the marzipan with a sharp knife. Form the remaining marzipan into 11 balls.

Brush the marzipan with the beaten egg and arrange the marzipan balls around the edge of the cake. Brush the tops of the balls with egg too, and place the cake under a hot grill to turn the marzipan golden.