

# Presenting the Official Women's Institute VE Day 2025 Orange and Ginger Cake recipe



"I am delighted to provide a recipe for the official Women's Institute cake in recognition of Britain's women's incredible effort during WWII, for VE Day 80. I have a strong affection for the WI, whose members were integral to the war effort at home. My recipe was used by my own

grandmother who lived through two world wars. Her recipe doesn't require mixers or whisks, and the batter will not curdle. This is my tribute to the women preserving food, and working tirelessly using simple methods and ingredients in those times. I hope you enjoy making and eating my Ginger and Orange cake!"

Nancy Birtwhistle



## About the baker

Nancy Birtwhistle is a Sunday Times bestselling author, lifelong gardener and Hull-born baker who won the fifth series of The Great British Bake Off in 2014. Motivated by protecting the planet for her ten grandchildren, Nancy decided to change how she used plastic, single use products and chemicals in her home. Sharing her tips online, she amassed an engaged international following of devoted fans interested not only in her delicious recipes, but also her innovative ideas and timesaving swaps that rethink everyday house and garden tasks to make as little an impact on the environment as possible. Nancy worked as a GP practice manager in the NHS for thirty-six years until she retired in 2007. She lives in Lincolnshire with her husband, dogs and rescue hens.

## Orange and Ginger Cake

This is a simple and classic bake and is made using The Rubbing In Method – not often seen these days.

It's a recipe used by my grandmother who had lived through two world wars, and requires no specialist mixer or whisk and the batter will not curdle – a handy recipe if you have little or no equipment. Just as women during World War II would have made it.

You will need: a mixing bowl and a 7 inch round cake tin greased and base-lined with paper or reusable baking parchment.

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees (fan) – 350f – gas mark 4

## Ingredients

200g self-raising flour  
pinch salt  
40g butter at room temperature  
40g lard at room temperature (or use all butter if preferred)  
100g caster sugar  
1 heaped tablespoon marmalade  
Finely grated zest of 1 large orange plus the juice  
1 tsp ground ginger  
100ml milk  
1 egg

80g stem ginger (from a jar of stem ginger in syrup)  
1 tbsp demerara sugar or sugar nibs to sprinkle over.  
Alternatively add 3 tbsp icing sugar to a bowl, add 1-2 tsp orange or lemon juice, stir until smooth and runny then drizzle over using a spoon or piping nozzle.

## Method

1. Start by prepping the stem ginger – wash under the cold tap, dry on kitchen paper then cut into small dice and place into a bowl.
2. Take then 1 tbsp of the recipe's weighed self-raising flour, add to the ginger and stir around to coat thoroughly. Set aside.
3. In a medium sized bowl place the self-raising flour, salt, butter and lard then rub in together just as you would for pastry. The mixture needs to be looking like fine breadcrumbs.
4. Add the ground ginger, sugar, zest, juice and marmalade and give a stir. Add then the egg followed by the milk which should be added a little at a time until you achieve a soft dropping consistency. You will probably need all of the milk but add it gradually just in case. If the batter is too thin the ginger will drop to the bottom of the cake whilst baking.
5. Finally fold in the chopped ginger.
6. Transfer to the prepared tin then sprinkle over either the demerara sugar or the sugar nibs or once completely cool drizzle over a simple icing.
7. Bake for 35-40 minutes until the cake is golden, risen and springy to the touch.
8. Leave to cool in the tin for at least 20 minutes before turning out onto a wire tray to cool completely.
9. Wrap in foil and store in a tin for a couple of days but if you just cannot wait to eat it – enjoy!

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