Honey Cake

A traybake called “Piermik”

When we were very young in the late 1960s my dad was self employed as a builder decorator and his regular clients were a large Jewish family living in North London. We loved the honey cake -that my family called piernik - that they baked especially and would send over for us girls. Our family recipe for piernik was not as moist as that one but we would add nuts and raisins to our piernik and with lovely spices including cloves, it was delicious.

Fast forward to the early 2000s, I was working in post production (TV and ads) in Soho and one of my colleagues brought in some honey cake to share with us for Jewish New Year. It was so moist, a nice balance of spice, so delicious and it was a real taste of home.

A lot of nagging and cajoling and persuading and finally he came into work with this recipe handwritten by his mum.

1lb 450gms liquid honey

10 fl oz 275 ml cold water

7 ozs 200gms granulated sugar

8 fl ozs 225ml sunflower oil

3 eggs

1lb 450gms self raising flour

1 level tsp each of ground ginger, cinnamon and mixed sweet spice

1 level tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 level tsp baking powder

2tbsp plus 2 tsp port type red wine

A baking tin 30 x 23 x 5cm high

Method

Preheat oven to 200c

Lightly brush oil in baking tin 30x23x5cm high and line with greaseproof paper

Pour liquid honey, cold water, sugar, sunflower oil into a saucepan and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved. Cool for 15 mins.

In large mixing bowl, whisk eggs until pale and fluffy slowly mix in the honey mixture, mixing / whisking all the time.

Dissolve bicarbonate of soda in the red wine. Stir into the egg + honey mixture all the dry ingredients and then add the wine mix. Mix until it is a pale and even colour, it will be thin.

Pour the cake mix into the baking tin, put it in the oven and immediately lower the temperature to 150c. Bake for 1 and a quarter –to 1 and a half hours until firm to the touch and rich brown.

Leave the cake in the tin until cool to touch. Remove carefully by turning it onto a cooling rack and then carefully lift off the tin. Turn it right side up onto another cooling rack and leave to cool completely. When the cake is cold, wrap it in foil. It tastes better and every day so keep it in a tin or wrapped well in foil.