

◀ APRICOT, RICOTTA AND ALMOND CAKE

We enjoyed ten blissful days in Sardinia on our honeymoon. In the evening, we would sit in the garden and enjoy large scoops of ricotta with fresh apricots and a spoonful of honey. In a way, this cake is an ode to that holiday.

SERVES 8-10

- ★ 200g white spelt flour (or plain flour)
- ★ 2 tsp baking powder
- ★ pinch of fine sea salt
- ★ grated zest of 1 unwaxed lemon
- ★ 150g unsalted butter, softened
- ★ 225g golden caster sugar
- ★ 250g ricotta, strained
- ★ 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ★ 2 tbsp almond liqueur, such as Amaretto (optional)
- ★ 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- ★ 6-8 ripe apricots, halved and stoned
- ★ 50g flaked almonds
- ★ icing sugar, to dust

1 Preheat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5. Line the base and sides of a 20cm springform cake tin with parchment paper.

2 In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt and lemon zest. Set aside.

3 In a separate bowl, using an electric whisk or stand mixer, beat together the butter and caster sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the ricotta, with the beaters set to the slowest setting, followed by the vanilla extract and almond liqueur (if using). Slowly pour in the beaten eggs, whisking continuously. Using a silicone spatula or wooden spoon, fold the flour mixture into the ricotta mixture.

4 Scrape the cake batter into the tin and level the surface. Arrange the apricots, cut side down, on top and scatter over the flaked almonds.

5 Bake in the oven for 50-60 minutes or until the cake is springy to the touch and a skewer or cocktail stick inserted into the centre comes out with just a few crumbs.

6 Allow the cake to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then remove the sides of the tin and leave to cool completely. Remove the base of the tin, dust the top of the cake with sieved icing sugar, then serve in slices.