

MILHOJAS CAKE AKA THOUSAND LAYER CAKE

14 crisp, crunchy layers of pastry sandwiching liquid gold (aka the king of ingredients, dulce de leche), walnuts, crème patissiere and jam. Whilst I have gone fancy and packed a lot into my version, the traditional would see it done with just the dulce de leche and walnuts. The inclusion of pastry cream and jam are commonly used and I can confirm, are a warmly welcomed addition to the party as they help to cut through the rich butteriness of the cake. Is it worth the time and effort? OF COURSE IT IS.

Recipe Makes: 1 x 20 cm / 8 inch cake

W H A T	Y O U D	N O U G H	D O U G H	D U L C E D E L E C H E	F I L L I N G C O N T
			375 g Plain/AP Flour, sifted Pinch of Salt 250 g Unsalted Butter* 3 Large Eggs, yolks only 190 ml Whole Milk** 1 tbsp Rum/Pisco 1 tsp Vanilla Bean Paste	1 x 397g Tin Condensed Milk	150 g Raspberry Jam
				C R E A M	T O F I N I S H
				250 ml Whole Milk 1 tsp Vanilla Bean Paste 50 g Caster Sugar 3 Large Eggs, yolks only 10 g Plain Flour*** 10 g Cornflour/starch***	150 g Walnuts, chopped 50 g Almonds, chopped *** sifted
			* room temp ** fridge temp		

M E T H O D

THE NIGHT BEFORE – Get the **dough** made and chilled the day before you are making and constructing the cake. Place all the ingredients into a stand mixer bowl. Using the paddle attachment mix all the ingredients together until they have just combined and a dough has formed. You want to keep the butter in clumps for a flakey pastry dough (similarly to a rough puff pastry) so underwork as opposed to overwork.

On a sheet of clingfilm, sprinkle on top a light dusting of flour. Transfer the rough dough on top and wrap and place in the fridge overnight. You want to give the butter time to solidify, dough to firm up and flour to relax.

Whilst that is chilling, make the **dulce de leche**. Into a large saucepan, add your tin of condensed milk and fill with enough water so the tin is submerged. Place the saucepan lid on top and place over a medium heat for 2.5 hours. Throughout the two hours just ensure the tin is always fully submerged.

After 2.5 hours, drain the water and allow the tin to cool before transferring out the contents, covering and leaving to cool.

THE MORNING OF – make the **crème patissiere**.

M
E
T
H
O
D

C
O
N
T
I
N
U
E
D

Use a balloon whisk to mix the egg yolks in a bowl, along with the sugar, cornflour and flour until pale in colour. Work through the gritty stage until the mix becomes fluid and smooth.

Pour the milk into a saucepan along with the vanilla and bring to near boil. When near boiling, pour 1/3 of the milk into the egg yolk mixture and whisk immediately until smooth.

Pour the egg yolk milk back into saucepan and mix. Reduce the heat and continue to stir the custard. Keep stirring until it thickens - we want this quite thick, a good sign to stop is when it bubbles in the middle.

Remove from the heat and transfer the custard to a large shallow tray to cool. Cover with clingfilm to prevent a skin forming and leave to completely cool.

Next up, let's **bake the dough layers**. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas Mark 4.

Divide the chilled dough into 14 even balls (I am pedantic and would suggest weighing each one to ensure they are equal weight but do bear in mind I have no life).

Roll out each piece on top of floured baking paper or silicon mat until thin – you are looking for this to be slightly larger than a 20 cm /8 inch cake tin, with a thickness of 1 mm max. Use the base of an 20 cm/ 8 inch cake tin to cut around as a guide and prick the entire surface of the dough with a fork.

Transfer onto a lined baking sheet and pop into the oven and bake for 8 to 10 minutes, flipping over halfway, until lightly golden. Remove and leave to cool on a rack. Repeat for the remaining 13 dough balls.

Now you're ready to **construct**. For ease, transfer the dulce de leche, creme pat and jam into separate piping bags.

Add a splodge of dulce de leche to your serving plate and place your first baked dough layer on top. Pipe a thin layer of dulce de leche on top and use an offset palette knife to smooth over. Sprinkle over a small handful of walnuts and almonds.

Place a dough layer on top but this time pipe over a thin layer of creme patisserie. Place a dough layer on top and pipe over some raspberry jam and smooth over once again. Repeat this layering process until you top the cake with the 13th dough layer.

Use the surplus dulce de leche to coat the outside and top of the cake, as a crumb coat almost.

Break down the final dough layer to a fine crumb and mix in with the remaining walnuts and almonds. Use this mix to coat the sides and top. Pop the finished cake in the fridge to set for at least 2 hours.

Serve at room temp, slice with a hot knife and enjoy.