

# GOOD TASTE

Cook it / Bake it / Celebrate it

Edited by Amy Bryant



## With this cake...

As Meghan and Harry are ditching the traditional fruit cake for something more modern, we share some of *Bee Berrie's* vegan versions, while *Susy Atkins* samples English fizz

# A slice of love

Elegant and delicious, baker Bee Berrie's wedding cakes taste as good as they look, says *Jessica Salter*

SITTING IN HER LIGHT-FILLED kitchen in east London, baby toys tucked away into a corner, baker Bee Berrie has an array of wedding cake samples for me to try. There's her bestseller, the Rose and Prosecco, a deliciously light and frothy cake that embodies 'romance and celebration', a moist Persian Love Cake, packed full of pistachios and honey, and then, more surprisingly, her range of hugely successful vegan wedding cakes: chocolate and avocado, banana and pecan, and lemon and lavender.

Demand is such that most of her brides this year wanted at least one tier to be vegan. 'It's very cool right now,' Bee says. 'People care more about what they are eating.' Bee, who is '50 per cent vegan' herself, teaches vegan baking at the Jamie Oliver Cookery School and says one of the most common myths is that vegan cakes taste different. 'They don't have to,' she says. 'I've spent hours perfecting recipes, tweaking the batter a bit here and there. It's been fun finding a new way to be creative with cakes.' She gives me a regular chocolate cake to try, alongside her most-ordered chocolate and avocado version: there's no discernible difference, both are gooey and delicious.

Even those couples choosing a dairy-based cake are steering clear of traditional fruit version, including Meghan Markle and Prince Harry, who have opted for a lemon and elderflower cake from the London-based Violet bakery. 'It's a great choice,' Bee says. 'It's fresh, seasonal, and it's a

unique recipe.' The royals are tapping into a national wedding trend for sponge tiers with fruit and edible flowers. 'I haven't been asked to make a traditional fruit cake for over a year,' Bee says. Why not? 'I think it's because no one actually likes fruit cake,' she laughs.

This year, however, along with baking four cakes a week for customers (which include celebrities as well as brides), Bee faces an even larger challenge: creating her own wedding cake. Or, to be more precise, the three, tiered vegan cakes that will tie in with her plans for a 'colourful, hippy and laid-back' wedding next month in Cornwall.

'Friends say I'm mad doing my own cake, but I can't not,' she laughs. 'I'll make the sponges in advance and freeze them.' She plans to decorate the cakes in her signature floral style. Reflecting her Instagram feed, which bursts with pretty cakes dripping with petals, one of her wedding cakes will have green flowers on white icing, another will be garnished with yellow rose petals, and the last with blue cornflowers – all sourced from an organic farm in Dorset. 'We don't have a big budget for flowers and we've got a big space to fill, so this will serve as decoration,' she says.

Decorating with edible flowers is growing in popularity; the hashtag #edibleflowers has more than 250,000 posts on Instagram and the royal wedding cake will also be decorated with petals. Bee thinks they're the perfect garnish for summer cakes: 'It looks so pretty and fresh,' she says.



## BEE'S TIPS

Bake in advance: sponge layers can be wrapped in cling film and frozen for up to two weeks.

Run a thin layer of icing around the cake, trapping any crumbs. Chill before applying a thicker layer and then smooth using a palette knife.

Avoid adding edible flowers until the last possible moment – the petals may wilt in warm weather.

## Vegan banana cake with pecans and chocolate chips

(Pictured opposite)  
Makes two x 8in round sponges

- ◆ 8 ripe, medium-sized bananas (the squishier the better)
- ◆ 350g soft brown sugar
- ◆ 2 tsp good vanilla bean extract
- ◆ 120ml groundnut or vegetable oil
- ◆ 375g self-raising gluten-free flour

(my favourite is Doves Farm)

- ◆ 1 tsp xanthan gum
- ◆ 2 tsp baking powder (optional)
- ◆ 100g pecans, chopped
- ◆ 100g dairy-free chocolate chips

**Peel the bananas** and beat the flesh in a food mixer on a medium speed, until it appears paler in colour and turns light and fluffy. This usually takes around 10 minutes.

**In the meantime**, preheat the oven to 195C/175C fan/gas mark 6 and line two round, 8in springform baking tins with parchment paper.

**Add the sugar, vanilla extract and oil** to the fluffy banana mixture and mix gently until combined.

**Add the flour, xanthan gum, baking powder** (if using), nuts and chocolate chips, with a pinch of salt, and mix just until combined – avoid knocking too much air out.

**Divide the mixture equally** between the two prepared tins, smoothing the surface. Bake for 25-35 minutes, until well risen and golden on top. A cocktail stick inserted into the centre should come out clean.

**Leave to cool** in the tin for 10 minutes then turn out on wire racks to cool completely before icing.

*To assemble a three-tiered cake*  
**You need seven batches** of cake

mixture to make four 10in sponges, four 8in sponges and four 6in sponges.

**Sandwich each set of four** with chocolate and avocado icing – you'll need three batches (see next page).

**Ice each tier** with vegan vanilla buttercream (see next page) – you'll need about three and a half batches – then set on top of each other, using dowel rods to strengthen the bottom tier.

**Chill until needed**, then decorate with unsprayed rose petals. Encourage the flowers to open by placing the stems in hot water. Remove the petals and press them gently on to the icing.

PHOTOGRAPHY:  
HAARALA HAMILTON

FOOD STYLING:  
BEE BERRIE



## Vegan chocolate and avocado icing

(Used in previous recipe)  
Makes enough to sandwich and ice a two-layer 8in round cake

- ◆ 200g very ripe avocado flesh
- ◆ 200ml maple syrup, or as needed
- ◆ 100g cocoa powder, or as needed

**Blitz the avocado flesh** with the maple syrup in a blender until completely smooth.

**Add the cocoa** and blend again, then taste and add more cocoa and/or syrup as needed. Chill before using.

## Vegan buttercream icing

(Used previous recipe)  
Makes enough to sandwich and ice a two-layer 8in round cake

- ◆ 250g solid white vegetable fat (such as Trex, available from supermarkets)
- ◆ 250g vegan spread (such as Vitalite; ensure that this doesn't contain soya, which will often split the icing)
- ◆ 1 tbsp vanilla bean extract
- ◆ 750g icing sugar

**Beat the two fats together** thoroughly until there are no lumps – a food mixer with a paddle attachment will make this easier. **Add the vanilla extract** along with half the icing sugar, and mix again until smooth. Different spreads have different water contents, so gradually add more icing sugar if needed, until you have the desired consistency.

**This can be stored** for a week in the fridge, or a month in the freezer.



## Vegan lemon and lavender cake

Makes three x 6in round sponges

*This recipe makes a beautifully light and moist sponge, but it is fragile, so handle with care.*

- ◆ 525ml aquafaba (approximately two tins worth of the juice drained from tinned chickpeas)
- ◆ 6 tsp white-wine vinegar
- ◆ 300g coconut cream (the solid cream scooped from the top of a can of coconut milk – the can should have a minimum coconut content of 70 per cent – *not* cream of coconut)
- ◆ 240g caster sugar
- ◆ 240ml groundnut or vegetable oil
- ◆ 420g self-raising flour
- ◆ 3 tsp baking powder
- ◆ 390g ground almonds
- ◆ zest of 3 lemons or 2 tbsps

- ◆ good-quality lemon extract
- ◆ 3-4 tsp culinary-grade dried lavender petals, finely chopped

**Whisk the aquafaba and vinegar** with an electric mixer on a low-medium setting until it begins to foam. Turn the mixer up to a high speed and continue to whisk until it forms soft peaks – this may take 10 minutes.

**In the meantime, preheat the oven** to 195C/175C fan/gas mark 6 and line three round, 6in springform baking tins with parchment paper. Beat the coconut cream a little to loosen it up.

**Turn the mixer back to a medium speed** and gradually add the sugar, one spoonful at a time. Add the oil a splash at a time until just combined. **Using a spatula**, fold in the flour, baking powder, ground almonds, coconut cream and lemon zest or extract. Be gentle and fold just until combined – do not overwork.

**Divide the mixture** between the three prepared tins, gently smoothing the surface. Bake for 20-25 minutes until they are well risen with a little colour to the

## BEE'S TIPS

For 'naked icing', gently spoon icing in between each sponge layer, allowing it to fall over the edge of the sponge. Chill before placing the next sponge on top, to avoid excess icing spilling out.

top, and a cocktail stick inserted into the centre comes out clean. **Leave to cool completely** in the tins before decorating.

*To assemble a three-layer one-tier cake* **Refrigerate the sponges** before you start to decorate.

**Using one batch** of vegan coconut icing (see below), gently spoon on or use a palette knife to load up icing on one sponge. Chill before adding another sponge on top and repeating. Finish with a final sponge and spoonfuls of icing on top.

**Chill before decorating** with fruit and edible flowers.

## Vegan coconut icing

Makes enough to sandwich and ice a three-layer 6in cake

*Chilling the tin of coconut milk overnight in the fridge is essential as it keeps the icing firm. This icing is best for dolloping on top of cakes for a rustic look.*

- ◆ 2 x 400ml can full-fat coconut milk (the coconut content should be a minimum of 70 per cent), chilled overnight
- ◆ 100-140g icing sugar, sifted
- ◆ 1 tsp vanilla bean extract

**Scoop the hard, thickened coconut cream** from the top of the cans, being careful not to add any thinner liquid.

**Whisk the cream in a food mixer** for 30 seconds on a medium speed until creamy and smooth. **Add most of the icing sugar**, and the vanilla extract, and whisk just until combined. Add more icing sugar if needed, and ensure it has a creamy texture.

**Chill thoroughly** before using.

# OUR NEW BOTTLE



## Vegan chocolate and avocado cake

Makes two x 8in round sponges

- ◆ 100g ripe avocado flesh (from about 1 medium avocado)
- ◆ 500ml non-dairy milk (soya works best)
- ◆ 2 tbsp white-wine vinegar
- ◆ 65ml groundnut or vegetable oil
- ◆ 2 tsp vanilla bean extract
- ◆ 430g self-raising flour
- ◆ 320g soft brown sugar
- ◆ 110g cocoa powder
- ◆ 2 tsp baking powder

**Preheat the oven** to 195C/175C fan/gas mark 6. Line two round, 8in springform baking tins with parchment paper.

**Using a food processor or blender**, blitz the avocado flesh with the non-dairy milk and vinegar until you have a smooth green liquid. Add the oil and vanilla extract and blitz again for a few seconds.

**Gently mix all the dry ingredients together** in a large bowl, then pour the green liquid on top. Mix well until combined.

**Divide the mixture equally** between the two prepared tins, smoothing the surface. Bake for 25-35 minutes, until a cocktail stick inserted into the centre of the sponge comes out clean-ish (the cake will be a little sticky). **Leave to cool** in the tin for 10 minutes then turn out on to wire racks to cool completely before icing.

*To assemble a two-tiered cake*

**You need two and a half batches** of mixture to make three 8in sponges and three 6in sponges. **Sandwich each set** of three with one and a half batches of chocolate and avocado icing, and ice with one and a half batches of buttercream (recipes on previous page).

**Carefully set the smaller tier** on top of the larger one and chill until needed.

**Decorate with organic, edible flowers**, leaves and herbs (my favourites are basil, rosemary, celery leaves and oregano flowers).

# Drink up

with Susy Atkins

Raise a flute of English fizz to Harry and Meghan next weekend



Let's hope many raising a glass to the royal couple next weekend choose to fill it with English sparkling wine.

This remarkable success story sees 5.9 million bottles of English wine now made on average each year, two-thirds of it sparkling, produced from 500 vineyards and over 130 commercial wineries. The fine fizz, wrought in our suitably cool climate, is exported to 27 countries and wins awards home and away. I judged at the recent Independent English Wine Awards (IEWA) in Bristol – a new and promising competition – and was very impressed by the super-fresh, crisply precise fruit and complex creaminess of the top sparklers. Three of the best gold medalists are below, and the full list of winners, still

and sparkling, is at [iewa.uk](http://iewa.uk).

New stars are still appearing of course. Mark and Sarah Driver's Rathfinny Estate has just launched its anticipated East Sussex sparklers; the Rathfinny Blanc de Blancs 2014, from chardonnay, is particularly refined ([rathfinnyestate.com](http://rathfinnyestate.com)). Most English wines are mainly available from estate websites or independent specialists such as Hawkins Bros ([hawkinsbros.co.uk](http://hawkinsbros.co.uk)), though both Waitrose and M&S now stock a decent range. The sparklers are expensive, but premium champagne-method fizz, with its meticulous techniques and long bottle-ageing, usually is.

The future looks bright. With one million new vines planted in England in 2017 and 1.5 million more set to go in this year, the English wine industry is growing rapidly. Highly likely we'll be toasting the marriage of little Prince Louis with it in a few decades' time.

## Try these



**Wiston Estate Blanc de Blancs NV, West Sussex**  
Wiston's wizard winemaker Dermot Sugrue used 100 per cent chardonnay grown on chalky Sussex soils to conjure up mineral notes, baked yellow apples, and a hint of crusty white bread.  
[wistonestate.com](http://wistonestate.com), £26.95; [swig.co.uk](http://swig.co.uk), £27.95



**Jenkyn Place Brut Classic Cuvée 2013, Hampshire**  
Hampshire is becoming a major county for English fizz – this gem is newly released, tasting youthful and bright with clean, crisp, crunchy fruit. Lovely now, but will age well, if you can wait.  
[waitrosecellar.com](http://waitrosecellar.com), £24.99; [jenkynplace.com](http://jenkynplace.com), £29.50



**Langham Rosé 2014, Langham Wine Estate, Dorset**  
Imagine the lightest of cream cakes dotted with raspberries and redcurrants, but dry and fresh on the finish – truly delectable Dorset pink sparkler, well worthy of a gold medal. *Selected M&S*, £25; [langhamwine.co.uk](http://langhamwine.co.uk), £24

Shout out to everyone who does their recycling.

It means we can make our new washing-up liquid bottle from 100% recycled PCR plastic.

It's what we mean by clean.  
#LETSLIVECLEAN

