

# The Sydney Morning Herald

LIFESTYLE FOOD

## Teresa Cutter: Using my great aunt's cooking methods makes me feel at home

By Teresa Cutter'

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I love baking but it hasn't always been a fairytale romance. I recall many occasions experimenting in my mum's kitchen while she was at work and making such a mess. In those days I never really followed recipes or measurements, I just estimated quantities, like my great aunt, Ciocia, did. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it was a disaster, but those disasters made me a better chef.

I learnt very early on in my chef's training that baking and creating desserts requires precise measurements and accurate weighing of ingredients, and that it is chemistry that combines them to make works of art.



Ciocia's babka recipe. PAUL CUTTER ACS.

### CIOCIA'S BABKA RECIPE

*Makes 1 babka*

Ciocia, my great aunt, would make this cake at least weekly, carefully conducting my uncle, who mixed it all together using a bowl and a wooden spoon. The wood fire cooked it perfectly.

- 250g salted butter, softened
- 180g raw honey
- 2 tsp vanilla bean paste
- 4 organic eggs
- 240g wholemeal spelt flour
- 60g cornflour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 200g natural yoghurt
- 3 tbsp cocoa powder

Preheat your oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Beat the butter, honey and vanilla paste using the paddle attachment of your stand mixer, or by hand with a wooden spoon, until creamy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Sift the spelt flour, cornflour and baking powder, then add to the batter along with the yoghurt. Spoon three-quarters of the batter into a lined baking tin.

Mix the cocoa powder with 60mls of boiled water to form a smooth paste, then add the chocolate paste to the remaining batter and mix through. Spoon the chocolate batter on top of the vanilla batter, then run a knife through the centre of the cake, forming swirls in the batter.

Bake for 60 minutes until cooked through. Remove from the oven and rest for 30 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

## **LEMON MELTING MOMENTS**

*Makes 10 cookies*



Melting moments. PAUL CUTTER ACS

Here's a sophisticated recipe that's perfect for celebrations or an impromptu high tea. As an alternative to the honeyscented cream cheese frosting, you can use crème fraîche.

- 300g almond meal

- 125g soft butter
- zest of 1 lemon
- 90g raw honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract Frosting
- 250g cream cheese
- 3 tbsp raw honey or organic maple syrup
- ½ tsp vanilla bean paste

Combine almond meal, butter, lemon zest, honey and vanilla in a food processor until mixed through. Spoon the dough onto a sheet of baking paper and shape into a log, enclosing the shortbread in the baking paper.

Refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or overnight.

Preheat your oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced).

Slice the dough into 20 round cookies and arrange on a oven tray lined with baking paper. Prick holes in each with a fork and bake for 30 minutes. Remove and allow to cool.

For the frosting, combine cream cheese, honey and vanilla. Mix well using a whisk or spoon until creamy. Sandwich cookies with a generous amount of frosting and enjoy.

**Teresa's tip** I've shared these recipes because I want everyone to enjoy the essence of baking their own delicious food at home. By cooking with children, people can pass on the tradition of making whole foods from scratch

***Healthy Baking: Cakes, Cookies + Raw* is available from [TheHealthyChef.com](http://TheHealthyChef.com), selected bookstores, iTunes and Amazon.**



**Teresa Cutter**

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