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*by Liz Robb*

## Strawberry and Vanilla Cupcakes



## Ingredients

115g butter or soft margarine  
 115g caster sugar  
 2 large eggs  
 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract  
 115g self-raising flour  
 2 tablespoons of milk  
 6 teaspoons of good strawberry jam  
 <strong>For the topping:</strong>  
 75g strawberries for the puree  
 130g butter  
 260g icing sugar  
 2 tablespoons of milk  
 3 large strawberries

## Preparation

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180 degrees or 160 degrees fan oven.
- 2 Cut the softened butter, if using, into small pieces. Put the butter or soft margarine into a large bowl with the caster sugar and cream together well.
- 3 In a separate small bowl, beat the eggs then mix with the vanilla extract. Add them to the butter and sugar and whisk until smooth and well combined.
- 4 Gradually sift in the flour and gently fold it in until it is all combined, then stir in the milk.
- 5 Place a fairy cake paper case into the 12 spaces in a bun tin. Spoon some of the cake mixture into the bottom of each paper case, carefully place half a teaspoon of strawberry jam in the middle, then cover with a little more cake mixture so that the jam is in the centre
- 6 the cases should be up to three quarters full. Bake in the preheated oven for 12-15 minutes, until they are a light golden colour and a skewer comes out clean. Allow to cool.
- 7 <strong>For the topping:</strong>

- 8 Slice the stalks from the tops of 75g of strawberries then chop them into pieces and blend them into a puree.
- 9 Remove the butter from the fridge well before you are ready to make the topping. Cut the softened butter into small pieces, place in a large bowl, sift in half of the icing sugar and beat together well until you have a smooth mixture.
- 10 Beat in the remaining icing sugar until smooth, then beat in the strawberry puree. Add milk if necessary, a little at a time, until the mixture reaches the desired consistency for piping.
- 11 Pipe the icing onto the cooled cakes, starting on the outside and spiralling into the centre.
- 12 Slice the stalks from the tops of the 3 large strawberries and cut them into quarters lengthways. Press a strawberry piece into the icing on top of each cake. Chill in the fridge for a little while, just until the icing is set.

### **Cooks Note**

Treat yourself this Easter by baking these sweet and pretty little cupcakes. Vanilla sponge with a strawberry jam centre, strawberry buttercream icing and a fresh strawberry on the top; how much more strawberry flavour can you fit in one cake!

Makes 12 fairy cakes.

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