

# The CAKE that made me *famous*

*Four famous bakers tell **Lisa Harris** about  
the cake that changed their lives forever*

FOOD PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW BURTON**



↗  
*Stripy  
rose cake*  
» PAGE 30



## Peggy Porschen's celebration cake

**PEGGY PORSCHEN IS BAKER TO THE STARS, INCLUDING ELTON JOHN, STELLA MCCARTNEY, MADONNA AND GWYNETH PALTROW. SHE RUNS CAKE PARLOURS IN BELGRAVIA AND CHELSEA, LONDON.**

As a teenager I made a Valentine's cake for a sweetheart, covered in little sugar blossoms, and that was it – I'd found my calling! I'd discovered the connection between cake and romance, and that's what my business has always been about. Baking is love. It's a language, really – a way to express the fact that you like somebody and, in a small way, to increase the world's happiness.

I launched my cake business from my home kitchen in 2003. Before that, I was pastry chef at the high-end caterer Rhubarb Food Design, and I was lucky enough to work on big celebrity events like Elton John's White Tie And Tiara Ball. That job introduced me to incredible clients, but I wanted to be a cake designer in my own right.

Stella McCartney asked me to make her wedding cake, which was my big break. Then, in 2005, my cookbook came out, which included my pretty stripy rose cakes. I made a lot of them as miniature wedding cakes – couples loved the novelty of personalising flavours and having individual cakes as a memento for guests – but the design also works well as a big cake.

Everything happened very quickly after that – orders accelerated, my work featured in Condé Nast's *Brides* magazine, and I was soon baking for high-profile celebrities. In 2010, we opened our parlour in Belgravia as a cake-tasting location and cafe, and we've been making cakes and confectionery for royals, celebrities and VIPs ever since. Earlier this year, we opened another cake parlour on Chelsea's King's Road. [peggyporschen.com](http://peggyporschen.com) ➤

In 2005 my *cookbook* came out, which included my *stripy* rose cakes'



Peggy Porschen (above); her pretty Belgravia cake parlour (below)





## Frances Quinn's novelty bake

**FRANCES QUINN WON 2013'S GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF, AND HOLDS THE GUINNESS WORLD RECORD FOR CREATING THE LARGEST JAFFA CAKE.**

I see the kitchen as an art studio and the cake as a canvas. I love transforming ingredients, and my creations often transform people's appreciation of cake, too. I like to push the boundaries rather than baking an ordinary Victoria sponge. That's what I'm famous for now; Mel and Sue would always tease me on *Bake Off*, saying, 'There's always a concept with you!' But sometimes I do just make flapjacks, I promise!

The cake that really changed my life was my giant jam sandwich cake. It was my first signature bake on the show, and featured in my first cookbook, *Quinntessential Baking*, two years later. People have commissioned me to make the most amazing versions ever since. I made a giant marmalade sandwich cake for the Paddington Bear film, a honey version featured in a Winnie-the-Pooh exhibition at the V&A, and my 'beans on toast' cake has been a big hit in the music industry. I've even been asked to start selling a sandwich-shaped mould so fans can make them at home.

Baking cakes like this has been life changing. It meant I could give up my job as a clothes designer and be true to myself designing cakes instead. Seeing my creations through from start to finish is so satisfying. I didn't enter *Bake Off* for fame, but I'm happy if my cakes are famous. *Quinntessential Baking* by Frances Quinn (Bloomsbury, £25)





**COOK TO WIN!**

Tweet us a pic of what you've been cooking @SainsburysMag with #IMadeThis for a chance to win a £50 Sainsbury's voucher\*



## 'JAM SANDWICHES' CAKE

'I sometimes use a special large bread-shaped cake tin for this cake, but here I simply bake the cake in a regular loaf tin and cut it into individual slices of "bread", ready to assemble as sandwiches.'

**SERVES 8** ❖ **HANDS-ON TIME** 30 MINS **TOTAL TIME** 1 HR 20 MINS, PLUS COOLING

200g soft **butter**  
200g **caster sugar**  
4 **medium eggs** (at room temperature)  
4 tsp **vanilla extract**  
200g **self-raising flour**

*For the filling*

50g soft **butter**  
100g **icing sugar**, sifted  
½ tbs **whole milk**  
½ tsp **vanilla extract**  
200g **strawberry or raspberry jam**

minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack. Leave to cool fully.

- 4 Next, make the buttercream for the filling. If you have a free-standing mixer, put the butter, icing sugar, milk and vanilla extract into the bowl, cover the bowl with a tea towel to prevent a cloud of sugar from escaping, and start beating slowly. Increase the speed and beat the mixture until it is fluffy and almost white, stopping a few times to scrape down the side of the bowl. I beat for up to 10 minutes at full speed to create a really light finish. If using a hand-held electric whisk, beat the butter in a bowl until soft and pale, then sift in the icing sugar in batches, working it into the butter with a spoon before adding the milk and vanilla. Beat at full speed until the buttercream is light and fluffy.
  - 5 Using a serrated knife, carefully trim off the browned ends of the loaf cake to reveal the golden inside. Then cut the cake into 1cm thick slices – you should get 16 slices.
  - 6 Taking a pair of slices, top one slice with the jam. Spread the underside of the second slice with buttercream and place on top. Or, divide the jam between the buttercream-topped layers and leave as open sandwiches. Cut in half to make triangles if you like.
- 580cals; 29g fat (17g sat fat); 7g protein; 1g fibre; 73g carbs; 54g total sugars; 0.9g salt ►

\*FOR FULL TERMS AND CONDITIONS SEE SAINSBURYSMAGAZINE.CO.UK/VOUCHER. SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY





### SEEING RED

For a really strong shade of red, food-colouring paste is best, and Sugarflair pastes ([sugarflair.com](http://sugarflair.com)) are suitable for vegans. Alternatively, you could use a 15g tube of Dr Oetker Extra Strong Red Food Colour Gel (available in store) mixed with 2 tablespoons of water, although the colour won't be as intense.





## Tarek Malouf's luxe cupcakes

TAREK MALOUF IS FOUNDER OF LONDON'S HUMMINGBIRD BAKERY, WHICH BROUGHT THE CUPCAKE CRAZE TO LONDON.

The red velvet cupcake absolutely made Hummingbird Bakery famous – it's what brings customers the first time and keeps them coming back. When I opened my first shop in Notting Hill, London, in 2004, American baking trends hadn't made their way to the UK – we were the first ones to do it.

Social media and iPhones weren't around at the time, but fantastic write-ups in *Vogue* and *Tatler* got our name out there, and word of mouth did the rest. We now have six bakeries across London and two in Dubai. Red velvet is the biggest seller in all of them. When we opened in Islington, more than 500 people turned up before we'd even started serving!

Customers go crazy for red velvet because it's so pretty, and also a little mysterious. Bicarbonate of soda and vinegar in the mix have a chemical reaction that helps with the red colour, and when you eat it you can't tell if it's chocolate or vanilla. The white frosting is sweet but also a little tangy, and it's a striking contrast to the dark sponge.

I first discovered red velvet in New York in 2001, then I trawled through vintage cookbooks to create our version. It involved a lot of trial and error in my kitchen at home. I didn't know at the time that this cake would change my life – and I prefer chocolate cake anyway! *The Hummingbird Bakery Cookbook* by Tarek Malouf and *The Hummingbird Bakery* (Mitchell Beazley, £17.99)

## RED VELVET CUPCAKES

'People can't resist Hummingbird Bakery's cupcakes. Mix all the ingredients well so the sponge has an even colour and texture. To make a red velvet layer cake instead, double the quantities below, divide between three 20cm cake tins and bake for 25 minutes at the same temperature.'

**MAKES 16** **V** **HANDS-ON TIME 1 HR 30 MINS TOTAL TIME 2 HR 10 MINS,** PLUS COOLING, CHILLING AND DRYING

### » GET AHEAD

The iced cupcakes can be kept for 2 days in an airtight container, and also freeze well.

120g soft **unsalted butter**  
300g **caster sugar**  
2 **large eggs**  
20g **cocoa powder**  
1 **tbsp red food-colouring paste\***, such as Sugarflair in Red Extra (see box, left)  
1 **tsp vanilla extract**  
240ml **buttermilk**  
300g **plain flour**  
1 **tsp fine sea salt**  
1 **tsp bicarbonate of soda**  
3 **tsp white vinegar**

For the cream-cheese frosting

100g soft **unsalted butter**  
600g **icing sugar**  
250g **full-fat soft cheese**, chilled

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas 4 and divide 16 paper cases between 2 x 12-hole cupcake trays.
- 2 Put the butter and the sugar in a free-standing electric mixer with a paddle attachment (or use a handheld electric whisk) and beat on medium speed until light and fluffy.
- 3 Turn the mixer up to high speed, slowly add the eggs and beat until well incorporated.
- 4 In a separate bowl, mix together the cocoa powder, food-colouring paste, 3 tablespoons of water and vanilla extract to make a thick, dark paste. Add to the butter mixture and mix until evenly combined and coloured (scrape any unmixed ingredients from the side of the bowl with a rubber spatula).
- 5 Turn the mixer down to slow speed and slowly pour in half the buttermilk. Beat until well mixed, then add half the flour, and beat until well incorporated. Repeat this process until all the buttermilk and flour have been added. Scrape down the side of the bowl again. Turn the mixer up to high speed and beat until you have a smooth, even mixture. Turn the mixer down to low speed and add the salt, bicarbonate of soda and vinegar. Beat until well mixed, then turn up the speed again and beat for a couple more minutes.
- 6 Divide evenly between the paper cases and bake in the preheated oven for 20–25 minutes, or until the sponge bounces back when touched. A skewer inserted in the centre should come out clean. Leave the cupcakes to cool for about 15 minutes in the trays before turning out onto a wire cooling rack to cool completely.
- 7 While the cupcakes are cooling, make the frosting. Beat the butter and icing sugar together in a free-standing mixer with a paddle attachment (or use a handheld electric whisk) on a medium-slow speed until the mixture comes together and is well mixed – cover with a tea towel to stop the icing sugar going everywhere. It will have a sandy texture. Add the soft cheese all in one go and beat until fully incorporated. Turn the mixer up to a medium-high speed. Continue beating until the frosting is light and fluffy – at least 5 minutes – but do not overbeat, as it can quickly become runny.
- 8 See Kitchen Tip above if you want to sprinkle the tops with crumbs. When the cupcakes are cold, spoon the frosting onto each one, gently smoothing over with a palette knife and making a swirl of frosting on each one.

\*Check your food colouring is vegetarian, if required

■ 455cals; 16g fat (10g sat fat); 5g protein; 1g fibre; 72g carbs; 57g total sugars; 0.3g salt ▶



### KITCHEN TIP

For the classic decoration, trim a little off the top of each cooled cupcake before icing, and crumble finely into a bowl. After you've frosted the cakes, scatter with these red velvet crumbs.





### » GET AHEAD

The loaf will keep for a couple of days in an airtight container. It can also be frozen.

## Bill Granger's breakfast loaf

**BILL GRANGER IS AN AUSTRALIAN COOK AND FOOD WRITER. HE HAS RESTAURANTS AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE GRANGER & CO CHAIN IN LONDON, AND STARTED FOOD TRENDS LIKE COMMUNAL TABLES, ALL-DAY DINING AND AVOCADO ON TOAST.**

When you cook dinner, no one really says thank you, but put a cake on the table and everyone says, 'Wow!'. Cake is so unnecessary, but that's the lovely thing about it, and what makes it so joyful.

I opened bills in Sydney in 1993, and I wanted to have something on the menu that was like banana bread, but which didn't exist already. Coconut is a nostalgic flavour in Australia, so I came up with this loaf cake that you cool, slice, then toast, so the coconut turns golden and releases incredible flavours. Slather it with salted butter and it's my favourite thing to eat whenever I'm in the restaurant.

This coconut bread became really famous after a *New York Times* food writer described it as 'extraordinary'. People

started coming from miles around to try it, and I still can't take it off the menu 25 years later! I became known for breakfasts after that. We'd created a kind of 'lifestyle' restaurant with big tables and lots of natural light, so it felt like eating in my home kitchen. It really caught on.

Baking is so satisfying; because it's repetitive and you have to concentrate on measurements, it gives you 'lost time' where you just concentrate on one thing. I especially love a melt-and-mix cake like this one. I never had a mixer when I was younger, so I loved just melting butter, mixing the batter up and pouring it into the tin. You put a wet, unappealing mixture in the oven and it comes out golden and delicious – it's magic!  
[grangerandco.com](http://grangerandco.com)



## COCONUT BREAD

'This is one of the signature dishes on our breakfast menu at Granger & Co. We serve it toasted and buttered, and it's also delicious with mixed berries and a spoonful of yogurt.'

**MAKES** 8-10 THICK SLICES **✪**

**HANDS-ON TIME** 15 MINS **TOTAL TIME** 1 HR 15 MINS, PLUS SOAKING AND COOLING

150g desiccated coconut	220g caster sugar
2 large eggs	75g unsalted butter, melted
300ml milk	To serve:
1 tsp vanilla extract	soft butter
310g plain flour	icing sugar
2 tsp baking powder	mixed berries, optional
2 tsp ground cinnamon	yogurt, optional

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas 4. Mix the desiccated coconut with 150ml boiling water in a bowl and leave to soak and absorb the liquid for 10 minutes. Grease and line a 900g loaf tin (about 21 x 10cm).
  - 2 Lightly whisk the eggs, milk and vanilla together in a jug or bowl. Sift the flour, baking powder and cinnamon into a bowl with a good pinch of salt, add the sugar and soaked coconut, and stir to combine. Make a well in the centre and gradually stir in the egg mixture until just combined. Add the melted butter and stir until the mixture is just smooth (don't overmix). Pour into the loaf tin and bake in the preheated oven for 1 hour, or until a skewer comes out clean from the centre.
  - 3 Leave in the tin to cool for 5 minutes, then remove to cool completely on a wire rack. Serve in thick slices, toasted, buttered and dusted with icing sugar. Accompany with mixed berries and yogurt if you wish.
- 492cals; 23g fat (16g sat fat); 9g protein; 5g fibre; 61g carbs; 31g total sugars; 0.4g salt ►



## STRIPY ROSE CAKE

'Smart stripes and candy pink are more fashionable than ever. This show-stopping cake is perfect for a celebration. If you want to make it for a children's party, try the stripes in vivid rainbow colours instead.'

**SERVES** 14-16 **V** **HANDS-ON TIME** 15 MINS  
**TOTAL TIME** 1 HR 15 MINS, PLUS SOAKING AND COOLING

*For the Victoria sponge*

300g soft **butter**  
300g **caster sugar**  
finely grated zest of  
**1 lemon**  
**6 medium eggs**, at  
room temperature  
300g **self-raising flour**  
a little **vegetable oil**,  
for greasing

*For the lemon syrup*

100g **caster** or  
**granulated sugar**  
finely grated zest of  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  **lemon**  
1 tbsp **limoncello**  
**liqueur** (or **lemon**  
**juice**)

*For the buttercream*

250g soft **unsalted**  
**butter**  
250g **icing sugar**, sifted  
finely grated zest of  
**1 lemon**

*To fill and decorate*

3 tbsp **lemon curd**  
100g sieved **apricot**  
**jam**  
**icing sugar**, for dusting  
750g **white ready-to-**  
**roll icing**  
200g **royal icing sugar**,  
sifted  
**pink food colour** of  
your choice\*  
**flower decorations**  
of your choice (we  
used sugarpaste  
flowers)

### » GET AHEAD

The sponges can be baked, wrapped and stored in the fridge for up to 2 days ahead, or frozen. The syrup and buttercream can both also be made a week ahead and stored in the fridge.

- 1 The cake should be made and assembled to the end of step 9 at least 1 day ahead to give the icing time to dry before adding the piping. Preheat the oven to 180°C, 160°C, gas 4. Grease and line the bases of 2 x 18cm sponge tins.
- 2 Place the butter, sugar and lemon zest in an electric mixer and, using the paddle attachment, cream together until pale and fluffy. Beat the eggs lightly in another bowl and slowly add to the mix, while paddling on medium speed. If the mixture starts curdling, add a little flour.
- 3 Once the eggs and the butter mixture are combined, mix in the flour at a low speed. Divide between the prepared tins and level the tops. Bake for 30-35 minutes. Test the sponges with a skewer; it should come out clean when the sponge is cooked through.
- 4 Leave to cool in the tins for 10-15 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool fully. For the lemon syrup, place the sugar and 100ml water in a saucepan, stir well and bring to the boil. Cool to lukewarm, then add the lemon zest and limoncello or lemon juice.
- 5 For the buttercream, place the butter, icing sugar and lemon zest in the bowl of an electric mixer and, using a paddle attachment, beat on medium speed until light and fluffy.
- 6 For a perfectly level finish, thinly slice the tops off each sponge with a bread knife. Slice each cake in half horizontally to make 4 layers of sponge in total. Brush each well with the sugar syrup. Spread a thin layer of buttercream on one layer of sponge and lemon curd on another. Turn the buttercreamed sponge upside down and place it on the bottom layer so that the buttercream and lemon curd come together. Repeat with the remaining 2 sponges. Soak the top of the sandwiched cake with sugar syrup again. Wrap and chill for 1-2 hours for the syrup to infuse and the cake to firm up.
- 7 When well chilled, coat the outside of the cake with a thin layer of buttercream, spreading it first over the sides, then over the top – this will create a crumb coat. Use a palette knife to level the top and a side scraper to straighten the sides. Repeat until you are happy with the shape. The cake should be level and straight for best results. Chill the cake for at least one hour, until the buttercream has set firmly.
- 8 Bring the apricot jam to the boil in a small pan and brush all over the cake, using a pastry brush.
- 9 On a surface dusted with icing sugar, roll out the white icing to 3mm thick.

Use to cover the cake, trimming off the excess using a small kitchen knife and smoothing over with your hands or an icing smoother. Place on a sheet of baking paper and let it dry for 1 day before decorating.

- 10 Once the icing has set firm, make up the royal icing to soft peak stage following the instructions on the pack, with 2 tablespoons of water, adding another teaspoon or two if needed. Divide between 2 bowls and colour one pastel pink and the other bright pink. Spoon into separate piping bags each fitted with a fine plain nozzle.
  - 11 Pipe lines as shown, starting at the top in the centre, lifting the bag and bringing it slowly down to the bottom of the cake. Touch the end point at the base, then stop piping. Pipe one line next to the other in alternating colours, keeping the lines as straight as you can. Finish the lines by piping small dots in the same colours all around the base.
  - 12 Place flower decorations in the centre of the cake, sticking them on with a dab of royal icing. Leave to set for about 30 minutes before serving.  
*\*Check your food colouring and decorations are vegetarian, if required*
- 825cals; 37g fat (22g sat fat); 6g protein; 1g fibre; 117g carbs; 99g total sugars; 0.7g salt ■



ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS: JAMIE LAU, PETRINA TINSLEY, DREW GARDNER, TAREK MALOU/HUMMINGBIRD BAKERY, FOOD STYLING: BIANCA NICE, PROP STYLING: MORAG FAROUHAR