



# ATHENA

Raspberry. Grappa. Lime. Mascarpone cream heart.



Goddess of war, handicraft and practical reason. Athena is in the breath between what provokes us and how we choose to react to it. She is the easy restraint of our untarnished self. The one we started out in this world with.

These layers of cake are woven from the day I met Athena and realised she had been by my side all these years, I just needed to call her.

## RASPBERRY, GRAPPA AND LIME JAM

- 1 Place the raspberries and caster sugar in a medium saucepan over low heat, stirring the fruit with a wooden spoon to coat in the sugar. After a few minutes all the sugar will be melted and the fruit will start to boil. Add the lime juice and stir to combine, then increase the heat to medium and boil, stirring occasionally, to ensure the jam isn’t catching on the bottom of the pan. The purpose of the rapid boiling is to maintain the colour of the raspberries, however, if the jam starts to splutter everywhere, turn the heat down a little. It’s not essential for the jam to reach setting point as this will be spread inside a cake – it’s far more important to preserve the flavour of the fruit. Boiling the jam for 10 minutes will be sufficient and, along the way, you will notice the bubbles become a more consistent size – this is also an indicator that the jam is thick enough. Remove the jam from the heat, **then add the lime zest and grappa and stir it through.** Cover the saucepan with a lid and allow to cool while you get on with making the amaretti layers.

## AMARETTI

- 1 Preheat the oven to 160°C. Line the base only of 3 x 20 cm | 3 x 25 cm | 3 x 35 cm cake tins with baking paper. Alternatively, because not everyone has three tins the same size, the layers can be shaped free-form on sheets of baking paper and then baked. Later, they will be moulded into one single cake tin along with the filling and set in the fridge for 4 hours. To create the shape, you need to draw three circles the size of the cake you are making on three pieces of baking paper and either pipe or spread the amaretti mixture onto the paper. I have explained how to do this below, but you can also refer to the ‘how to shimmy with sponge’ method on page 256.
- 2 Prepare three squares of baking paper by drawing a 20 cm | 25 cm | 35 cm circle on each of them using your cake tin as a template. Assess the space in your oven and how many amaretti layers you will be able to bake at once and scout around for the equivalent number of trays to place the baking circles onto. Don’t worry if you don’t have enough trays – these layers can be baked in batches.
- 3 To make the amaretti, scatter the almonds onto a baking tray and pop them in the oven for 10–15 minutes or until they are lightly toasted and golden. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely on the tray, then place the cooled almonds in a food processor and blitz until fine crumbs form.     *( cont.)*

SIZE	20cm	25cm	35cm
SERVES	10-12	12-15	20-30

RASPBERRY, GRAPPA AND LIME JAM			
fresh raspberries	250g	350g	750g
caster sugar	125g	175g	375g
limes, zested and juiced	1	1½	3
grappa	20ml	30ml	40ml

AMARETTI			
blanched almonds	200g	240g	570g
egg white	90g/ 3 eggs	110g /4 eggs	240g /6 eggs
caster sugar	200g	240g	570g
vanilla paste	1 tsp	1½ tsp	2 tsp
amaretto (or ½ amount in almond extract)	½ tbsp	¾ tbsp	1 tbsp

MASCARPONE CREAM HEART			
vanilla bean(s), split and seeds scraped	1	1½	2
caster sugar	60g	120g	200g
mascarpone	175g	250g	500g
cream cheese, softened	120g	170g	335g
crème fraîche or natural yoghurt	140g	200g	400g
pure cream	285g	405g	820g
grappa	30ml	45ml	80ml

TO ASSEMBLE			
mascarpone	100g	150g	300g
pure cream	100g	150g	300g
limes, zested and juiced	1	1½	2
fresh raspberries	450g	650g	1kg
freeze-dried raspberries (optional)	50g	50g	50g

- 4 Increase the oven temperature to 170°C. Ensure the egg whites are weighed to the specifics in the ingredients list, as not all egg whites weigh the same and this will affect the recipe, then weigh the sugar in preparation for making the meringue.
- 5 Place the egg whites in an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment and whip on high speed until soft ribbons start to form. Reduce the speed to medium and gradually add the sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, leaving 5 seconds between each addition, until all the sugar is added and the meringue is firm and glossy. Continue to beat the meringue for a further 2 minutes to make sure it is really firm, then remove the bowl from the mixer and fold through the vanilla, followed by the ground almonds and finally the amaretto, ensuring everything is well combined.
- 6 Divide the mixture between your three baking circles or tins by either weighing each one on a scale (for perfection) or using your eye to estimate the same size (you only live once). Spread the amaretti out using a small offset palette knife until it reaches 2 mm inside each circle – this is just to give you a buffer for expansion. Bake the amaretti layers for 20 minutes | 25 minutes | 30 minutes or until they are crisp. Remove from the oven and cool on a wire rack.

MASCARPONE CREAM HEART

- 1 Prepare the vanilla sugar by using the back of a palette knife to rub the seeds of the vanilla through 1 tablespoon of caster sugar on a chopping board. This will disperse the seeds in order to distribute the precious vanilla through the cream. Add the vanilla sugar to the remaining sugar and stir to disperse. See the note about making vanilla sugar on page 262.
- 2 Using a food processor, blend half the mascarpone together with the cream cheese and vanilla sugar until smooth and creamy. Pay extra attention to scraping down the sides of the bowl to ensure any lumps of cream cheese are caught by the blade and eliminated. They can ruin a beautiful cake. Finally, add the crème fraîche (or yoghurt) and blend for a further 1 minute to combine, then decant the cream cheese mixture into a large bowl.
- 3 Whip the pure cream with the remaining mascarpone in a separate bowl using a hand whisk until firmly whipped, then fold the cream through the cream cheese mixture. This will lighten the cream for the filling, making it like clouds, then fold through the grappa.

TO ASSEMBLE

- 1 Prepare a 20 cm | 25 cm | 35 cm cake tin by lining it with plastic film, making sure you press snugly into the groove where the base of the tin meets the sides and allow the plastic film to hang over the rim of the cake tin and down the sides. You can also use baking paper, although the plastic film makes it easier to remove from the tin. A springform tin is also handy in this situation. I find wetting or oiling the cake tin ever so slightly will make the plastic cling to the inside of the tin, so you can achieve a neat lining and subsequently a sharper shape to the cake.
- 2 Begin by placing one of the cooled amaretti layers in the base of the tin, even with your best efforts previously shaping the amaretti, you may still need to trim it to fit the tin (I find scissors the easiest). Spoon half the jam over the top of the amaretti and gently spread it all the way to the edges of the tin. Pour half the mascarpone cream heart over the top of the jam and smooth it evenly all the way to the edges of the tin using an offset palette knife, then add another layer of amaretti and repeat the jam and cream layer once more, finishing with the

final sheet of amaretti. Cover the cake with the excess plastic film hanging over the sides of the tin and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight.

- 3 Whip the mascarpone and cream together using a hand whisk until softly whipped, then fold through the lime zest and juice. The juice will naturally thicken the cream once added, so don't go overboard with the initial whipping, it only needs to be loosely whipped.
- 4 Remove the cake from the fridge and invert it onto your cake stand or serving platter. Use the plastic film to lever it out of the tin, then remove the film. Dollop the lime cream into the centre of the cake and, working in a circular motion, use an offset palette knife to smooth the cream to the edges. Decorate the top of the cake with fresh upturned raspberries. If you have freeze-dried raspberries at hand, they can be useful to fill any gaps on the top and they add a little texture for interest, too.
- 5 This cake needs to be kept refrigerated until serving, but can generally sit out for 1 hour (weather dependent) before cutting. ( *end.* )

NOTE.

Grappa is a fragrant grape-based pomace brandy of Italian origin. It is not essential to put it in the jam, however, it is crucial for the flavour of the mascarpone cream heart in the cake. To make this cake alcohol-free, omit the amaretto (or extract) and the grappa. Substitute the grappa with an extra two vanilla beans in the mascarpone filling. The toasted almonds in the amaretti will give you enough of the almond flavour without using amaretto or extract, but perhaps you could whisper to the almonds when you put them in the oven that they might sing with more flavour.