

### Alice Anderson's astonishing 'Anzac' biscuits

The *War Chest Cookery Book* holds a special place in Australian food history. Released in 1917 to raise money for the war effort, it contains the first known recipe to be included in a published cookbook under the name 'Anzac biscuits'. The recipe was contributed by Alice Anderson from North Sydney, whose brother James was serving in France. It bears absolutely no resemblance to the Anzac biscuits of today. Filled with jam and topped with icing, these biscuits were likely known by another name until Alice gave them a new moniker fitting the cause, something that happened often in war-time cookbooks. National Trust magazine editor Liz Harfull researched Alice's story and told it for the first time in her award-winning book *Tried Tested and True*, updating the recipe for today's cooks. With Anzac Day being celebrated on April 25, why not give it a try.

120 g butter, softened  
120 g caster sugar  
2 eggs, lightly beaten  
150 g (1 cup) plain flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon mixed spice  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
160 g (1 cup) rice flour  
raspberry jam

#### *Icing:*

125 g (1 cup) icing sugar mixture  
small knob of butter  
hot water

Preheat the oven to 180°C (in a conventional oven). Line a baking tray with baking paper.



Cream the butter and sugar until the sugar begins to dissolve. Add the eggs and beat until combined. Sift together the plain flour, baking powder, mixed spice and cinnamon. Add the sifted ingredients and the rice flour to the butter mixture. Stir together with a knife to form a soft dough. Form the pastry into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 to 45 minutes.

Dust a board or work surface with plain flour, then roll out the dough until it is only a few millimetres thick. Use a plain round biscuit cutter, about 4 cm in diameter, to cut the pastry. Place the biscuits on the baking tray, and bake for 12–15 minutes, until golden. Allow the biscuits to cool on a wire rack.

When cold, join the biscuits with a thin smear of raspberry jam.

To make the icing, in a small bowl combine the icing sugar, butter and enough hot water to thin the icing, mixing it with a knife until smooth. Decorate the top of each biscuit with a thinly applied circle of icing.

Makes about 30

### Liz's tips

- Refrigerating the soft biscuit dough will make it easier to handle.
- Dip the cutter in flour, so it doesn't stick to the dough.
- While baking, allow a few centimetres between the biscuits for spreading.
- The original recipe did not stipulate what kind of jam to use, but raspberry is my favourite. Plum jam also works well.
- In case some of the biscuits have spread more than others, match up evenly-sized and shaped pairs of biscuits before you start filling them.
- For the icing, substitute lemon juice for the water if you would like a sharper flavour.
- The biscuits will keep for at least a week in a sealed container.

