

## Hedgehog

By Heritage Living editor and author Liz Harfull

Hedgehog is a bakery classic in South Australia, but nothing beats the home-made version of this popular slice, which was a favourite in my family when I was growing up. Sinfully rich with butter and cocoa powder, we preferred it without the added sugariness of icing but that's not how you make it if you are entering it in a show cooking competition, as per this version from the McGuinniss family of Warracknabeal in Victoria, who provided their prize-winning recipe for *The Australian Blue Ribbon Cookbook*.

500 g Marie biscuits

285 g butter

110 g (1/2 cup) white sugar

3 1/2 tablespoons cocoa powder

2 eggs

3/4 teaspoon vanilla essence

hundreds and thousands (optional)

*Chocolate icing (optional)*

185 g (1 1/2 cups) pure icing sugar

2 tablespoons cocoa powder

10 g butter, softened

3/4 teaspoon lemon juice

2 tablespoons hot water, approximately

Line the base of a lamington pan (approximately 30 cm x 24 cm) with baking paper, extending the paper above two opposite sides.

Break the biscuits into pieces roughly the same size as a 5-cent coin.

Put the butter, sugar and cocoa into a small saucepan and stir continuously over low heat until the butter has melted and the sugar has completely dissolved. Take the mixture off the heat and let it cool. In a small bowl, whisk together the eggs and vanilla. Stir into the cooled chocolate mixture and return the saucepan to the heat. Cook gently, stirring constantly, for about a minute until the consistency of thick gravy. Remove the saucepan from the heat and add the biscuits, stirring until well combined.

Press the mixture firmly into the prepared pan, using the back of a spoon to push it into the corners and level it out. Run a fork over it firmly, both across and along the length of the pan, then use the spoon again to smooth it over.

To make the icing, sift the icing sugar and cocoa into a medium-sized mixing bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the butter and lemon juice. Pour a small amount of hot water directly onto the butter so that it melts. Gradually add more water, stirring until the mixture is combined and a spreadable consistency.

Decorate the slice with the hundreds and thousands while it is still warm, and then cover it and put it in the fridge to set. Remove the slice from the fridge and lift it out of the pan. Allow it to reach room temperature before cutting it into squares or fingers.

### **Tips from the cook**

Break the biscuits by putting them in a bowl, and pushing down on them with the base of a coffee mug. Shake the bowl to bring any large pieces to the top and apply the mug again.

It is easy to burn the chocolate mixture, so keep the heat low and stir continuously.

Make sure you whisk the eggs thoroughly, and that you do not add them to the chocolate mixture while it is still hot, or it will cook the eggs before they are incorporated. The chocolate mixture needs to be cool enough for you to put your finger into it.

If the slice is too dry it won't hold together. If this becomes apparent before you put it in the lamington pan, add a little more melted butter.

The fork technique helps to bring more of the butter mixture to the top and keep the slice moist.

Hedgehog keeps well in the deep freeze, un-iced.



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