

The book features a scrumptious collection of tried and trusted recipes for gifts from your kitchen – cakes, choux puffs, cookies, tarts, snacks and fillings with many variations, as well as several low-carb, high-fat recipes for people on special diets (Banting, paleo, keto, gluten-free, sugar-free). Master baker Katrien van Zyl tried to focus on easy, flop-proof recipes that you can rustle up without having to hunt for foreign ingredients. Step-by-step photographs illustrate more complicated techniques, so that anyone who can follow basic instructions will be able to achieve them.

Katrien also shares packaging ideas for your baked goodies and explains ways to recycle containers and decorate them to suit any occasion.

Packed with practical hints, the book further indicates for how long food will remain fresh at room temperature, as well as freezing times for those who want to start preparing for special events well in advance.

Katrien's Gifts from the kitchen is lavishly illustrated with stunning photographs showing that the most beautiful gifts can come from the kitchen. It has something for everyone, whether you are the one doing the baking, or the lucky recipient of a delicious, attractively packaged edible gift.



Katrien van Zyl knew from the age of 12 that she wanted to bake for a living. A self-proclaimed chocoholic, she combines these two loves when baking commissioned wedding and party cakes. After completing a four-year degree in home economics at Stellenbosch University, she worked in the catering industry for several years. After her own wedding, she became involved in wedding planning and commercial baking for weddings and parties and soon started marketing her original wedding and party cake designs from her website.

After the major success of her first two books, *Katrien's Cakes* and *Katrien's Mini Cakes*, she was inundated with requests for courses and she started teaching cake decorating. She is also a popular guest on food shows and on television and radio. Katrien is married and lives in Blommendal, Cape Town. She is also the author of *Sugar Brides and Grooms* in the popular Twenty to make series, as well as *Katrien's Dessert Cakes* and *Katrien's Crafty Tray Bakes*.

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Katrien's Gifts from the kitchen

Katrien van Zyl



Almond and strawberry shortbread

This buttery shortbread is combined with strawberry jam and flaked almonds for a flavourful treat. The buttercream is a delicious addition to the shortbread.
Makes 12 muffin-sized shortbread tartlets

SHORTBREAD

- 230 g (1 cup/8 1/4 oz) salted butter or baking margarine, at room temperature
 - 100 g (3/4 cup/3 1/4 oz) white sugar
 - 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) vanilla essence
 - 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) almond essence
 - 1 large egg
 - 260 g (2 cups/3 3/4 oz) cake flour
 - 40 g (3 tbsp & 1 tsp/1 1/2 oz) cornflour (cornstarch)
 - a pinch of salt
 - 125 ml (1/2 cup) strawberry jam
 - 5 ml (1 tsp) white or dark balsamic vinegar (optional)
 - 25 g (4 tbsp/1/4 oz) flaked almonds
1. Preheat the oven to 180 °C (350 °F) for a conventional oven or 160 °C (325 °F) for a fan-assisted oven. Spray a 12-hole muffin tin with non-stick cooking spray.
 2. Put the butter, sugar and essences in a bowl and beat with a handheld electric beater or standing mixer until it is light and fluffy. Add the egg and mix to incorporate.
 3. Sift together the cake flour, cornflour and salt, add to the butter mixture and beat until dough forms and all the flour is incorporated.
 4. Wrap the dough with clingfilm and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
 5. Cut off 480 g (1 lb 1 oz) of chilled dough, then coarsely grate the rest on a baking tray and place it in the freezer.
 6. Divide the chunk of dough into 12 pieces of 40 g (1 1/4 oz) each, roll them into balls and place the balls into the muffin hollows.
 7. Dip the bottom of a glass into flour and press down on a ball to flatten it; repeat for the other balls and prick the dough with a fork.
 8. Place the shortbread bases in the oven and bake for 20 minutes.



Apple-rose cinnabuns

These cinnabuns are soft and buttery inside and crispy on top. Combined with apples and cinnamon, they make a warm and fragrant gift.
Makes 10–12 cinnabuns

- Cinnabun dough**
 - 390 g (3 cups/14 oz) cake flour
 - 50 g (1/4 cup/1 1/4 oz) white sugar
 - 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) salt
 - 10 ml (2 tsp) instant dry yeast
 - 60 ml (1/4 cup/2 1/4 fl oz) just-boiled water
 - 125 ml (1/2 cup/4 1/4 fl oz) cold milk
 - 60 g (1/4 cup/2 oz) salted butter, melted
 - 1 large egg
 - Apple filling**
 - 2 large or 3 small red apples
 - 45 ml (3 tbsp) lemon juice
 - Butter filling**
 - 120 g (1/2 cup/4 1/4 oz) salted butter, softened
 - 100 g (3/4 cup/3 1/4 oz) soft brown (treacle or muscovado) sugar
 - 15 ml (1 tbsp) ground cinnamon
 - 60 g (1/4 cup/2 oz) finely chopped pecan nuts (optional)
1. Mix the cake flour, sugar, salt and yeast together in a bowl.
 2. Mix the boiled water with the cold milk to make a lukewarm mixture.
 3. Add the milk and water mixture, melted butter and egg to the flour mixture and mix with a dough hook using a standing mixer or electric beater for about 4 minutes on medium speed, until a smooth ball of dough forms.
 4. Transfer the dough to an oiled bowl and cover with clingfilm. Leave the dough to rest in a warm spot for about 30–45 minutes until doubled in size.
 5. While the dough is resting, preheat the oven to 180 °C (350 °F) for a conventional oven or 160 °C (325 °F) for a fan-assisted oven and spray the muffin tin(s) with non-stick cooking spray.
 6. For the apple filling, core the apples with an apple corer and cut each apple in half from top to bottom. Cut each apple half into thin strips.
 7. Pour the lemon juice onto a dinner plate and dip the apple slices in the lemon juice.
 8. Spread the apple slices out on the plate. Heat them in a microwave oven at full power for 2–3 minutes just to soften the slices slightly. Set aside to cool completely.
 9. For the butter filling, mix the softened butter, brown sugar, cinnamon and nuts, if using. Place a teaspoonful of the butter mixture into each hollow of a 12-hole or two 6-hole muffin tins.



9. Spoon the three shades of batter into each madeleine hollow, using the equivalent of about 5 ml (1 tsp) per colour (or 15 ml/1 tbsp of mixture in total). The holes should be about 3/4 full. I spooned the colours from light to dark to create an ombre effect.
10. Place the baking tray in the oven and bake the cookies for 8–10 minutes. The edges should be slightly golden brown.
11. Take the tray out of the oven and leave about a minute or so. Place a cooling rack on top of the tray and flip them over, holding on to both. Tap the tray on the cooling rack so that the madeleines can fall out. Leave to cool before sandwiching with filling.
12. For the next batch, place the madeleine baking tray in the refrigerator for a few minutes to cool and repeat steps 9–11.

TIP

Madeleines can be kept in an airtight container for two to three days and frozen for up to three months.

CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM

Makes 250 ml (1 cup/9 fl oz)

- 120 g (1/2 cup/4 1/4 oz) salted butter or baking margarine, at room temperature
 - 130 g (1 cup/4 1/4 oz) icing (confectioner's) sugar
 - 30 ml (2 tbsp) unsweetened cocoa powder
1. Beat the butter with a handheld electric beater or a standing mixer on a slow setting until it is light and fluffy.
 2. Sift together the icing sugar and cocoa powder, add to the butter and beat on medium speed until thoroughly mixed.
 3. Place a damp cloth over the bowl or cover the icing with plastic clingfilm so that the surface does not dry out.



Assembling and decorating the madeleines

1. Place a round or star-shaped piping nozzle into a piping bag (see "How to fold a piping bag" on p. 14) or, if you do not have these items, cut a small hole in one corner of a Ziploc bag and spoon in the buttercream.
2. Pipe lines of filling on the flat side of half the madeleines. (Or pipe a swirl on each madeleine and add a decoration.)
3. Sandwich two madeleine halves together with filling in the middle. Dust with icing sugar if preferred.



TO MAKE HEARTS

1. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface, also dusting the top so that the roller does not stick to it. Roll it out to about 1 cm (1/2 in.) thick.
2. Using a ruler, measure out and cut a rectangle of 15 cm x 20 cm (6 in. x 8 in.).
3. Mark the rectangle into 1 cm (1/2 in.) sections and cut strips 15 cm (6 in.) long. You should have 20 strips. Do not knead the cutouts together to roll out again; rather cut them up into small pieces to fry for snacks.
4. Make one heart at a time. Place a strip on its side so that the cut edges are at the top and bottom. Brush milk over the strip and turn it so that the floured edges are at the top and bottom again.
5. With the milk-brushed side of the strip on the inside, form a V and pinch the dough at the fold to form the pointed end of the heart.
6. Starting at the top, roll each leg of the pinched strip inwards to form the heart shape. The milk will ensure that the dough will stick to itself.
7. Brush some milk on the inside edge of a roll and press the two rolls together, flattening them lightly with your finger, so that they stick together and the heart keeps its shape.
8. Repeat steps 4–7 to make more hearts.
9. Pour the cooking oil into a pot and heat over low heat until it reaches 180 °C (350 °F). Test by placing a piece of bread in the oil: it should take at least 60 seconds to brown, otherwise the oil is too hot.
10. Take the sugar syrup out of the refrigerator or freezer and place it close to where you will be frying the hearts. If you wish, you could put the bowl of syrup into your sink filled with ice and cold water to keep the temperature down.
11. Place a cooling rack over a baking tray to catch drips and keep this close to the bowl of syrup.
12. Place 5–6 hearts into the hot oil. Fry for 2 minutes and then turn them over with a fork to fry on the other side. Fry for another 3 minutes, turning them occasionally until they are golden brown and crispy.
13. Lift the hearts out of the hot oil and drain on paper towels if necessary, then dip the warm hearts into the cold syrup. Cover them with syrup and leave them in the syrup for a minute or two.
14. Lift the hearts out of the syrup with a slotted spoon and place on the cooling rack so that any excess syrup can drain off.