

Penguins' Igloo

Penguins and their antics bring this cake to life. They are easy to make (see page 18) and you can vary their positions and expressions in so many ways to suit your own ideas and sense of humour. The igloo is easy to carve and the brickwork effect is added to the sugarpaste covering with simple tools. Royal icing icicles complete the polar scene and there are snowballs to add to the penguin mayhem.

You will need

Two 15.3cm (6in) round cakes
Large knife
700g (1lb 8½oz) ganache
Palette knife
25.4cm (10in) cake card, round
25.4cm (10in) cake board, round
Pastry brush
Sugarpaste: 750g (1lb 10oz) white, 400g (14oz) duck-egg blue, 500g (1lb 1½oz) black and 250g (8½oz) orange
Rolling pin
Smoother
Ruler
Turntable
Dresden tool
Bone tool
Silver ribbon
Non-toxic glue stick
Diamante strip
Piping bag
Royal icing
Edible glitter and food bag



1 Level off both cakes and put one on top of the other. Carve into an igloo shape by rounding off the top cake with a large knife.

2 Cut the bottom cake in half and ganache inside. Draw round the cake on a 25.4cm (10in) cake card, adding a tab shape for the porch. Cut out this shape, put the cake on it and place on a temporary cake board. Use ganache to join the two cakes together, then ganache the outside.





3 Take a block of white sugarpaste and use it straight from the packet, without kneading it first. Carve it into shape to make the porch for the igloo.



4 Push the porch into place on the igloo.



5 Cut a thick strip of white sugarpaste. Wet the front of the porch and stick the strip on, making an arched shape.



7 Smooth the sugarpaste into the igloo with your hands and mark the base with the edge of the smoother, then cut off the excess.



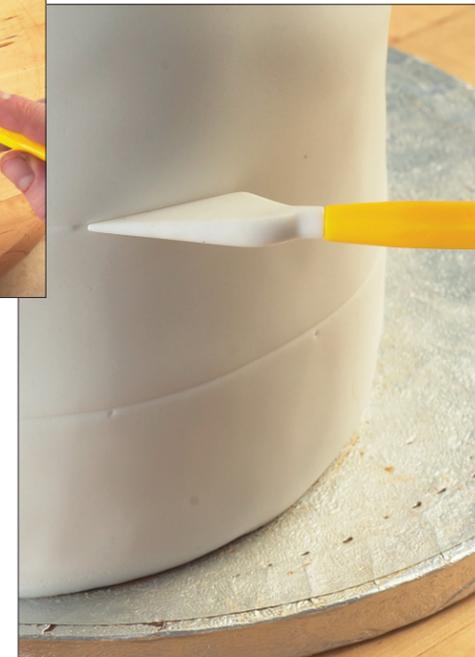
8 Mould the sugarpaste around the door with your fingers, pushing it slightly into the indent.



6 Smooth the ganache with a pastry brush and boiling water. Roll out white sugarpaste to around 5mm (1/4in) thick and large enough to go over the whole igloo with some to spare. Lift on the rolling pin and place it over the igloo.



9 Measure 3.8cm (1 1/2in) up from the base of the cake and mark with a Dresden tool. Turn the cake on the turntable and keep marking the same height, then turn the cake again and join all the marks to create the lowest bricks of the igloo. Continue marking the rows of bricks the same distance apart up the cake.



10 Continue going round the cake marking the rows of bricks until you reach the top of the igloo.



11 Mark the uprights of the brickwork, creating bricks 5cm (2in) wide. Mark the porch with brickwork in the same way.



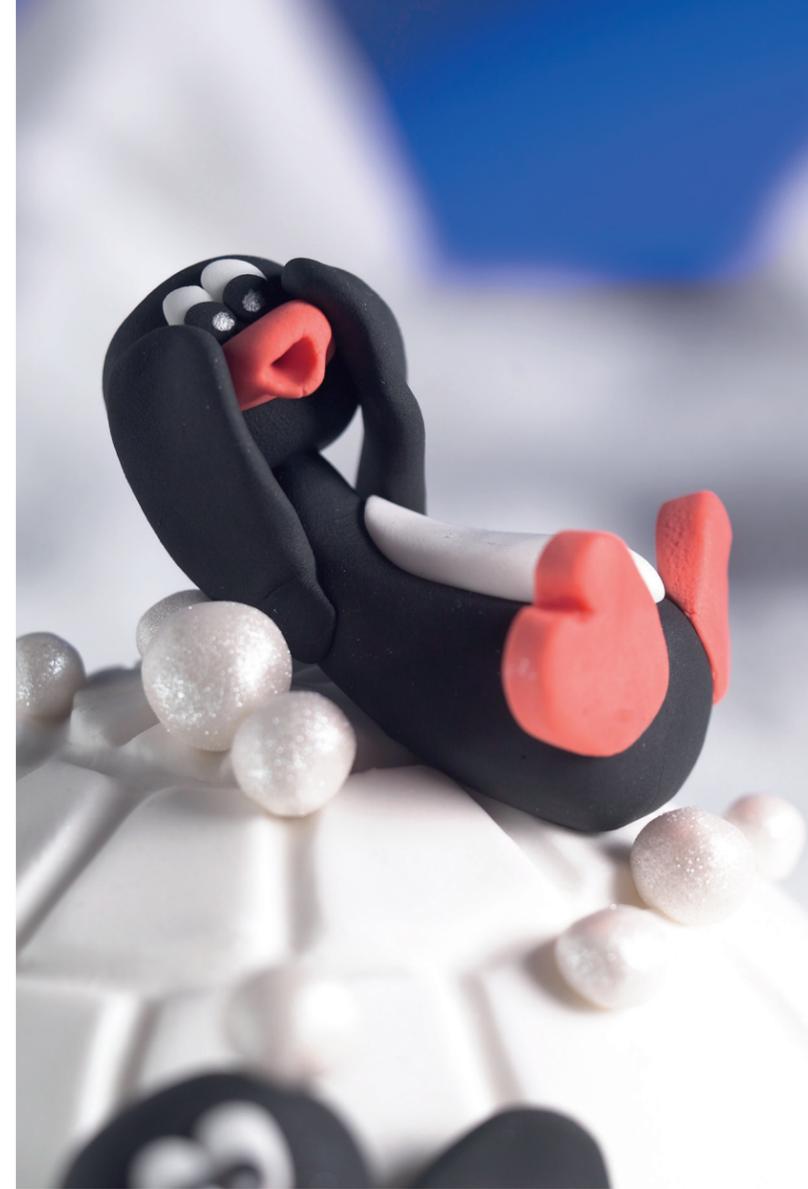
12 Wet the end of a bone tool and run it along all the cracks to soften and widen them.



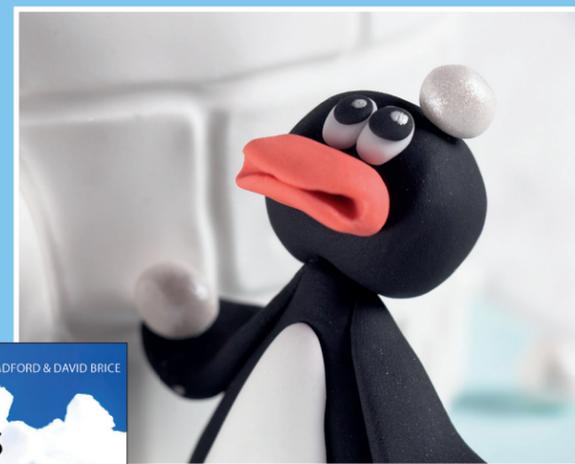
13 Roll out duck-egg blue sugarpaste to 4mm (1/8in) thick and ice and trim a 25.4cm (10in) cake board. Stick on a silver ribbon, then a diamante strip on top.



14 Transfer the cake on its cake card to the iced board. Pipe royal icing icicles up the side to different heights as shown. To add snowballs, roll balls of white sugarpaste. Tip edible glitter into a food bag with the balls and shake together. Brush water on to the iced board, the igloo and some of the penguin's flippers and place the snowballs.



Details from the Penguins' Igloo cake.



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ISBN: 978-1-84448-883-4

Recipes

Cake

A full video on the making of this cake is available on our website. The recipe below is enough to produce a 25.4cm (10in) plus a 15.3cm (6in) round cake, or the same batch will produce one 25.4cm (10in) square cake.

330g (12oz) unsalted butter
330g (12oz) dark chocolate (60% cocoa if possible)
9 tsp (45ml/1½fl oz) instant coffee
240ml (8fl oz) water
75g (2½oz) cocoa powder
187g (6½oz) plain flour
187g (6½oz) self-raising flour
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
720g (1lb 9oz) golden caster sugar
6 large eggs
10½ tsp (55.5ml/2 fl oz) vegetable oil (rapeseed preferred but not essential)
165ml (5½fl oz) buttermilk

- **Chocolate sauce** Place the butter, chocolate, coffee and water into a pan on a medium heat. Slowly stir until everything blends together then put to one side.
- **Egg batter** Start with the eggs in a bowl. Add the buttermilk, then the vegetable oil and whisk together for 3 minutes, then put to one side.
- **Dry ingredients** Mix together the cocoa powder, caster sugar, plain and self-raising flour and bicarbonate of soda.
- Pour the chocolate sauce into the egg batter and whisk it through.
- Adding a little at a time, pour the chocolate batter into the dry ingredients, mixing through each time. Once combined, whisk quickly for 2 minutes.
- Line cake tins (sides and base) with greaseproof paper then fill them to about half way. Place in a pre-heated oven at 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2 for 2 hours. If baking two cakes, put the bigger cake on the higher shelf.
- You can pour Irish cream liqueur over a finished, cooled cake to add moistness and flavour.

Tip

For best results if you need to carve the cake, freeze and defrost it first.



Chocolate ganache

Once you start layering cakes with chocolate ganache, you won't look back. It gives a far sharper finish than buttercream, allowing neat edges. You can use dark, milk or white chocolate, but dark is best, as the higher cocoa content gives a quicker setting time and lower melting temperature; perfect when working in warmer climates.

Dark and milk chocolate ganache is made from boiling cream, then mixing in the chocolate with a ratio of 568ml (1 UK pint) cream to 907g (2lb) chocolate. These amounts will make 1.4kg (3lb 10oz) of ganache. For white ganache, increase the chocolate by a third to 1.22kg (2lb 11oz) and this will make 1.68kg (3lb 11oz) of ganache.

If you use a US pint (473ml) of cream, there will not be enough cream to melt the chocolate, so you need to melt the chocolate in a bain marie (over boiling water) before mixing it into the boiling cream. The recipe will then work in the same way.



Royal icing

Using these quantities produces nearly 1kg (2lb 3oz) of royal icing.

20g (¾oz) egg albumen
133ml (4½ fl oz) water
800g (1lb 12oz) icing sugar

- Mix together the albumen and water using your mixer.
- Add half the icing sugar and mix until fully mixed through.
- Add the remaining icing sugar a bit at a time then beat (on the slowest speed) until the icing is at the desired consistency.
- To prevent the royal icing drying out, cover with a clean, damp cloth or tea towel and overwrap in plastic food wrap.
- If the icing softens, add a little extra icing sugar and re-beat.



Buttercream

500g (1lb 1½oz) unsalted butter
1kg (2lb 3oz) icing sugar

- Ensure the butter is at room temperature. Put the butter in the mixing bowl then slowly add the icing sugar on a low speed.
- Once it is all mixed through, mix on medium speed for three minutes.

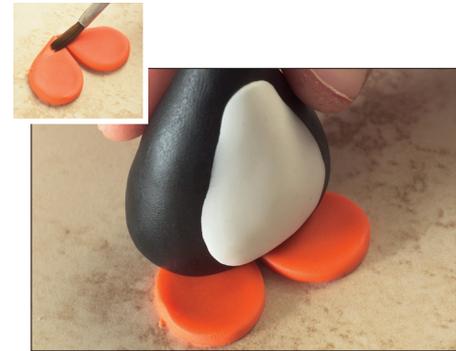
Making a penguin



1 Make a cone in black for the body and flatten it. Make a small white cone, flatten it and press it on to the body. Smooth it in with two fingers.



2 Roll out orange sugarpaste 2mm (1/16in) thick and cut out two feet with a petal cutter.



3 Push the feet together and brush them with water. Press on the body. Push dry spaghetti through to the work surface as for Santa.



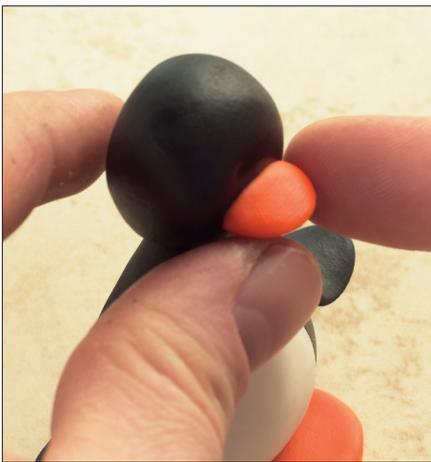
4 Make a black sausage for arms, roll flat and cut in half. Brush the body with water so that it goes tacky. Trim the arms and cut the shoulders at an angle.



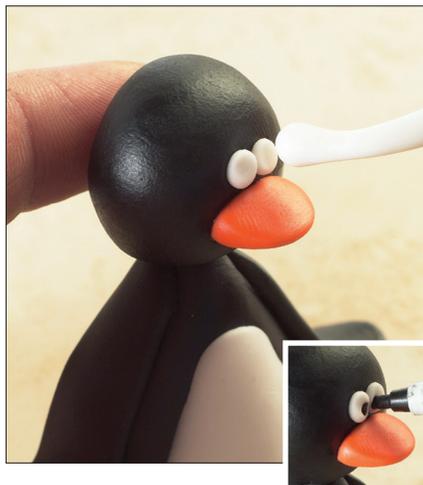
5 Place the arms on the tacky surface on the body and curl them up.



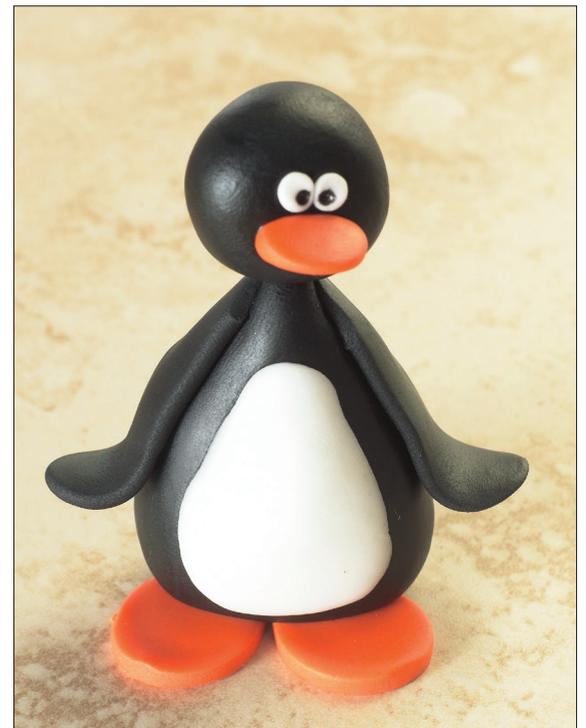
6 Make a black ball to size and push it on the spaghetti for the head. Make a small orange ball and flatten one side for the beak. Cut off the back.



7 Press on the beak.



8 Make little white eyeballs as for Santa. Push them on and press them with a bone tool. Add pupils with black edible pen.



The finished penguin.