

ROSEBUD MADELEINES

It was the curled-in smallness of these tender sponge biscuits, as well as the fact that they're flavoured with rosewater, that made me name them as I have. I like them with coffee when pudding's been just a plate of cheese, but eat them with whatever and however you want. The dried rosebuds in the picture are obviously not an obligatory ingredient: for me, it's just a Citizen Kane kinda thing.

50g unsalted butter, plus 1 tablespoon
for greasing
1 large egg
40g caster sugar
pinch of salt

45g plain flour, preferably Italian 00
1 tablespoon rosewater
icing sugar for dusting
24-bun mini-madeleine tin

Melt all the butter over a low heat, then leave to cool. Beat the egg, caster sugar and salt in a bowl for about 5 minutes, preferably with an electric mixer of some sort, until it's as thick as mayonnaise. Then sprinkle in the flour; I hold a sieve above the egg and sugar mixture, put the flour in and shake it through. Fold in the flour with a wooden spoon and then set aside a scant tablespoon of the cold, melted butter for greasing the tins and fold in the rest along with the rosewater. Mix well, but not too vigorously. Leave to rest in the fridge for 1 hour, then take out and leave at room temperature for half an hour. Preheat the oven to 220°C/gas mark 7.

Generously brush the insides of the madeleine tins with the tablespoon of butter (melting more if you feel you need it) before filling them with half the cake mixture (this amount does 2 batches). About 1 teaspoonful in each should do: don't worry about covering the moulded indentations; in the heat of the oven the mixture will spread before it rises. Bake for 5 minutes, though check after 3. Turn out and let cool on a rack, then arrange on a plate and dust with icing sugar. Repeat with the remaining half of the mixture.

Makes 48.