

Swedish

Fika

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A Tribute to Swedish Fika

Have you heard of the Swedish word *fika*? It's basically a coffee break, but also a time to pause and connect. It's a tradition that began to take shape as early as the mid 19th century, when coffee gatherings became an increasingly common way of socialising, particularly among women. But it was perhaps in the 1960s that fika truly came into its own. This was when coffee breaks were written into many Swedish union agreements and became part of everyday life.

Coffee is, of course, a central part of fika, but just as important is the chance to indulge in something sweet. This book brings together recipes for all the baked goods associated with Swedish fika, from soft cardamom buns and princess cake to a wide variety of cookies. Because whether fika is grand or simple, shared with many or enjoyed in quiet solitude, it is a ritual that deserves to be taken most seriously – preferably with something freshly baked on the plate.

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Cardamom buns

These soft, buttery and fragrant buns celebrate the warm, floral flavour of cardamom – a beloved spice in Swedish baking. They're beautifully twisted and quite honestly the ultimate fika treat.

Makes 16 buns

Sweet yeast dough

30 g fresh yeast
250 g cold water
100 g granulated sugar
1 egg
1 tsp salt
100 g room-temperature butter
1 tbsp freshly ground cardamom
575 g strong wheat flour

Filling

100 g room-temperature butter
100 g granulated sugar
1 tbsp freshly ground cardamom

Simple syrup

100 g water
90 g granulated sugar

Topping

100 g granulated sugar
1 tbs freshly ground cardamom

1. Sweet yeast dough: Put all ingredients in a mixing bowl. Knead by hand or using a stand mixer for at least 10 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. Cover and refrigerate for 1–12 hours.

2. Filling: Mix the filling ingredients in a bowl.

3. Roll out the chilled dough on a floured surface into a rectangle, approx. 30 × 40 cm. Spread the filling evenly over the rectangle, all the way to the edges. Fold $\frac{1}{3}$ of the dough (from the short side) towards the middle, then fold the other side of the dough on top of that, creating three layers. Now roll the dough into a rectangle, approx. 25 × 35 cm.

4. Cut the rectangle into 1 cm-wide strips. Gently stretch one strip at a time as long as possible without tearing it. Twist it into a bun by wrapping it twice around four fingers, loosening it from your fingers and wrapping the dough that remains across one more time. Fasten the end underneath the bun.
5. Place the buns on baking trays lined with baking parchment. Cover and leave to rise at room temperature for 1–2 hours until doubled in size. Preheat oven to 240 °C.

6. Simple syrup: Boil water and sugar until dissolved.

7. Topping: Mix the sugar and cardamom together.

8. Place one baking sheet at a time in the middle of the oven and lower the temperature to 200 °C. Bake for approx. 12 minutes. Immediately after baking, brush the buns with the syrup and sprinkle over the cardamom sugar.



Sticky chocolate cake

This gooey and decadently rich chocolate cake is a Swedish staple, and very easy to whip up using only a few basic ingredients. Pro tip: if you have the time, bake it the day before and let it set in the fridge. It's even better that way!

Makes 10–12 slices

225 g butter
450 g granulated sugar
4 eggs
210 g plain flour
40 g cocoa powder
1 tbsp vanilla sugar
1 tsp salt

Topping

icing sugar

1. Preheat oven to 175 °C. Line a 23 cm springform tin with parchment paper and grease the sides.
2. Melt the butter and mix it with the sugar. Leave to cool, then whisk in one egg at a time. Sift the dry ingredients and stir them into the mixture.
3. Pour the batter into the tin and bake in the middle of the oven for 25–30 minutes, until the edges are set but the centre is slightly wobbly. Allow to cool completely at room temperature, then chill for a few hours.
4. Dust the cake with icing sugar before serving it with whipped cream and, if desired, some berries.



Chocolate balls

These nostalgic no-bake chocolate treats come together in minutes and are a true Swedish fika staple, loved by both children and adults.

Makes about 25 balls

230 g rolled oats
 200 g room-temperature butter
 180 g granulated sugar
 30 g cocoa powder
 2 tsp vanilla sugar
 30 g double cream
 30 g cold brewed coffee
 40 g dark chocolate

Topping

desiccated coconut

1. Briefly pulse the oats in a food processor. Mix all the ingredients together except the chocolate.
2. Melt the chocolate and let it cool slightly before stirring it into the mixture.
3. Shape the mixture into balls and roll them in desiccated coconut.

Vacuum cleaners

Named after their resemblance to old-fashioned vacuum cleaners, these rich, chocolatey rolls wrapped in green marzipan are flavoured with an arrack liqueur.

Makes about 20 rolls

Filling

100 g room-temperature butter
 75 g icing sugar
 18 g cocoa powder
 2 tsp vanilla sugar
 400 g crumbs from a sponge cake
 2 tbsp Swedish punsch

Coating

400 g coloured marzipan
 150 g dark chocolate

1. *Filling:* Mix all ingredients to a smooth paste. Spoon the paste into a piping bag without a tip. Cut an opening about 2 cm wide.
2. *Coating:* Roll out the marzipan into a 30 × 35 cm rectangle. Pipe a long strip of filling along the top edge of the marzipan. Roll so the marzipan encloses the filling and trim the edge. Repeat until all filling and marzipan are used. Cut the rolls into 5 cm-long logs. Chill until firm.
3. Melt the chocolate, dip the ends of each log in it and allow to set.

Princess cake

The name might say princess, but this is the true queen of Swedish cakes, seen in every bakery and very common during celebrations of any kind. The original recipe from 1929 did not include jam – traditionally, that would be called an opera cake – but most Swedes are willing to break the rule.

Makes about 12 slices

Sponge

3 eggs
125 g granulated sugar
60 g potato starch
45 g plain flour
1 tsp baking powder

Filling

1 batch raspberry jam;
see recipe on p. 20
1 batch vanilla custard;
see recipe on p. 11
500 g double cream

Topping

400 g coloured marzipan
icing sugar

Marzipan rose

20 g coloured marzipan

- 1. *Sponge:*** Preheat oven to 190 °C. Grease and flour a 20 cm springform tin.
- 2.** Warm the eggs and sugar over a double boiler until the sugar dissolves (around 55 °C), then whisk with an electric mixer for approx. 10 minutes.
- 3.** Sift together the starch, flour and baking powder and fold into the mixture. Pour the batter into the tin and bake on the lower shelf of the oven for approx. 20 minutes. Leave to cool in the tin.
- 4. *Filling:*** Slice the sponge into three layers. Place the bottom layer on a serving plate and spread the raspberry jam over it. Add the next layer, pipe the vanilla cream over it and place the final layer on top.
- 5.** Whip the cream and cover the whole cake with it. Create a rounded dome of cream on the top.
- 6. *Topping:*** Roll out the marzipan thinly and cover the cake with it. Shape it gently around the cake with your hands and trim any excess. (Create a leaf or two from the excess marzipan if you wish.)
- 7. *Marzipan rose:*** Divide marzipan into one larger and five smaller pieces and roll each into a ball. Shape the large ball into a cone for the centre bud.
- 8.** Place one small ball between layers of plastic, e.g. in a piping bag, and flatten it with your finger to form a thin petal. Attach petals one by one around the centre, slightly overlapping. Trim any excess marzipan and adjust shape as needed.
- 9.** Decorate the cake with the rose and leaves. Dust with icing sugar.



Raspberry caves

Soft and tender vanilla cookies filled with a spoonful of raspberry jam. These are true Swedish classics, comforting and charming in equal measure.

Makes 15–20 cookies

200 g room-temperature
butter
270 g plain flour
90 g granulated sugar
2 tsp vanilla sugar
1 tsp baking powder

Filling

125 g raspberry jam;
see recipe on p. 20

1. Preheat oven to 175 °C.
2. Quickly mix all the ingredients into a dough. Roll the dough into balls, press a small hollow into each ball and put them on a baking tray lined with baking parchment.
3. Fill each hollow $\frac{2}{3}$ full of raspberry jam.
4. Bake the cookies in the middle of the oven for approx. 15 minutes and leave them to cool on the baking tray before serving.

