



The Ultimate **MAKEOVER**

Trifle

ANGELA NILSEN delves into the layers of a trifle and discovers a lighter way to serve this ever-popular dessert
Photographs DAVID MUNNS

A third of the fat, just as luscious

When I think of trifle, the first thing I picture is a generous layer of thick, billowy cream. I then imagine the spoon sinking a little further into an even thicker layer of egg-rich, creamy custard, before it delves into the lower depths of the bowl to scoop up the sweetened fruit and buttery, booze-soaked sponge. It's all very tempting and all very fattening. So my challenge was to recreate this lusciousness in a lighter yet equally alluring way.

Expert advice

All the layers would need a makeover. My initial thoughts were to swap the rich cake layer for amaretti biscuits or macaroons. However, when Fiona Hunter, Good Food's nutrition expert, told me that these were still quite high in fat, I opted to try a fat-free sponge, which came out much lower. She also assured me that adding booze

wasn't a problem as I would be using such small quantities.

For the fruity layer I discussed trying blueberries for a change. 'These are a good source of antioxidants,' said Fiona, 'so get in as many as you can.' I was pretty confident about the custard, having created a lower-fat version to accompany my Makeover sponge pudding recipe for last November's issue. I would just need to tweak the consistency to ensure the trifle's top layer didn't sink into it. Last was the cream layer. 'I often mix half double cream with half Greek yogurt,' said Fiona. This would maintain richness, but could I eliminate cream completely?

In the Test Kitchen

I bought a fat-free Swiss roll, but it crumbled before I'd even sliced it. Homemade would be far superior both in texture and taste, but

having to whisk the sponge mixture over hot water, as is recommended in fat-free sponge recipes, made it more of a chore. I liked the addition of blueberries, but when added raw they lacked flavour. As for the topping – as soon as any kind of cream was added, the fat content shot up, so I needed to consider alternatives that would still provide a creamy taste and fluffy texture.

A fresh approach

To simplify things, I whisked the sponge without sitting it over simmering water – it frothed up into a wonderful airy, thick mixture. I also liked the fact that my fat-free cake recipe needed just three ingredients while the bought one had 12 listed on its packaging. Briefly cooking the blueberries in a lightly thickened syrup brought out their flavour, especially when I grated in some lime zest. The colourful syrup gave me something fruity to drizzle over the sponge along with the booze. My low-fat custard recipe deceived the tasters who thought it had several egg yolks in. Finally, I added a little extra cornflour to give it more body. After making numerous mixtures of crème fraîche, different yogurts and cream for the topping, I remembered using mascarpone once for an Italian-style trifle. I stirred a light version of this into some Greek yogurt and the combination was not only the best cream lookalike, it tasted creamy, too.

The verdict

Wendy Doyle, Good Food's nutritionist, told me that I'd cut the calories by well over half, the fat by two-thirds and the saturated fat by nearly two-thirds. Tasters agreed that this version had all the attributes of the classic – in fact, they preferred the lighter texture. So when you want the look and taste of indulgence without the guilt, this is the ideal dessert to bring to the table.

MAKING IT HEALTHIER

One serving of classic trifle contains 713 kcalories, 53g fat (28g of which is saturated fat) and 34g sugar. My version contains 292 kcalories, 18g fat (10g saturated fat) and 20g sugar.

Here's how I did it

- Made a fat-free sponge for the base, reduced the egg yolks in the custard and replaced cream with half-fat crème fraîche. Used light mascarpone and Greek yogurt for the topping instead of cream.
- Used less sugar in the overall recipe, and replaced sweetened jam with pure jam with no added sugar.



Blueberry trifle

SERVES 8 • PREP 30 mins
plus chilling • COOK 30 mins
Moderately easy

The custard, cake and fruit layers can be made a day ahead ready for assembling.

FOR THE CUSTARD:

25g/1oz golden caster sugar
2 tsp custard powder
2½ tsp cornflour
350ml/12fl oz semi-skimmed milk
1 egg yolk
1 vanilla pod, slit lengthways
200ml tub half-fat crème fraîche

FOR THE CAKE:

50g/2oz golden caster sugar
2 eggs
50g/2oz self-raising flour
2 tbsp wild blueberry 'St Dalfour with no added sugar' fruit spread
3 tbsp Marsala

FOR THE FRUIT:

2 tbsp golden caster sugar
zest 1 small lime
225g/8oz blueberries

FOR THE TOPPING:

200g tub organic Greek yogurt
250g tub light mascarpone
2 tsp golden caster sugar

1 Make the custard: blend the sugar, custard powder and cornflour with 1 tbsp milk to make a runny paste. Beat in the egg yolk. Pour the remaining milk into a pan, scrape in the vanilla seeds, add the pod, then allow to come just to the boil. Stir this into the cornflour paste, then pour into a clean pan. Cook over a medium heat, stirring all the time, until thickened. Remove from the heat, then stir in the crème fraîche until smooth. Pour into a bowl, cover the surface with cling film to stop a skin forming, allow to cool, then chill until completely cold.

2 Make the cake: heat oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Lightly oil and line the base of a 20cm round cake tin. sugar and eggs into a bowl. Whisk with electric beaters for 5 mins until very thick, paler in colour and the consistency of whipped cream. Sift over the flour and quickly, but lightly, fold it in. Spoon the mixture into the

tin and carefully level it, being careful not to squash it. Bake for 25 mins until risen, then remove and cool on a wire rack. Peel off lining paper. Halve the cake so you have a semi-circle. (The other half can be frozen for another time.) Split the semi-circle in half with a knife, then sandwich back together with fruit spread.

3 Put the sugar and lime zest for the fruit into a pan with 2 tbsp water. Bring slowly to the boil until the sugar has dissolved, then bubble for 1½-2 mins until syrupy. Tip in the blueberries, then cook very briefly, stirring once or twice only, just until they start to burst and release their juices (but still stay whole) and you get a purple syrup. Set aside to cool.

4 The sponge and custard layers can be built up to 2-3 hrs ahead of when you want to serve. Cut the jammy sponge into cubes, then place in the base of a glass dish. Drizzle over the Marsala. Keep about ¼ of the berries back for the top, then spoon the rest over the sponge with a little syrup. Discard the pod from the custard, then pour it over the fruit.

5 Just before serving, beat the yogurt, mascarpone and sugar together until smooth and creamy. Pile onto the custard, then drizzle over the reserved fruit and syrup. Use a skewer to swirl some of the juices through the creamy topping. Serve straight away or the syrup discolours the topping. This is best eaten the same day.

PER SERVING 292 kcalories, protein 8g, carbs 26g, fat 18g, sat fat 10g, fibre 1g, sugar 20g, salt 0.28g