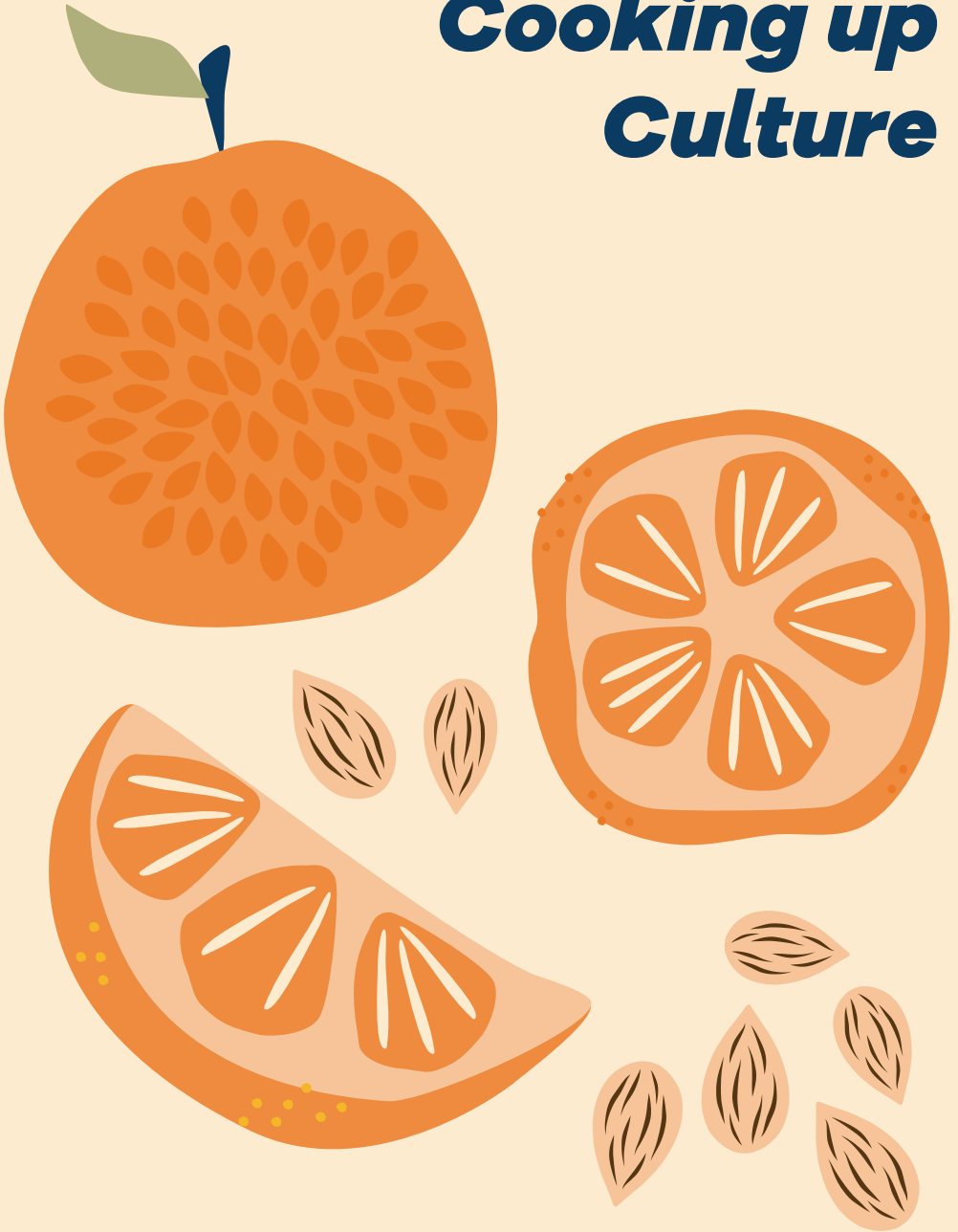


# ***Cooking up Culture***



***Passover Chocolate Almond Sponge***  
***by Rita Erlich***



“This cake originated in a book that was given to my mother in the 1960s. It was an American cookbook by Mildred Grosberg Bellin, called the Jewish Cook Book. I have adapted her recipe slightly.

“This was a cake cooked most Passovers when I was young. I cook it now, too, and every year we say ‘This is delicious, we should make it more often.’ But we don’t: it’s the Passover cake.

“Most cakes smell good when they are baking – this is particularly good because of the mix of nuts, chocolate and spices. And it is, of course, an aroma that reminds me of my mother’s baking.

“During Passover, no leavening may be used. That is to recall the haste in which the ancient Hebrews left Egypt, when there was no time to allow the bread to rise. For the eight days of Passover, we eat no flour, no bread, nothing made with yeast. Many people keep a special set of crockery and cutlery especially for use during Passover, to ensure that they are kept separate from possible contact with leavened foods.”

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### Ingredients

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**8 eggs, separated  
(or 7 very large eggs)**

**250g caster sugar**

**Pinch salt**

**Grated zest one orange  
(or teaspoon orange  
blossom water)**

**120g almonds, ground**

**80g dark chocolate, grated**

**¼ cup orange juice**

**¼ cup kosher Passover  
wine (or muscat or dark  
rum)**

**¾ cup fine matzah meal  
mixed with a teaspoon of  
ground cinnamon and a  
teaspoon mixed spice**

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### Method

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Line a 23cm springform baking tin with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 180°C (175°C fan-forced).

Beat the egg yolks, sugar and salt until light and thick. (An electric beater is best.) Add the orange zest/orange blossom water towards the end of beating.

Fold in the grated chocolate, the ground almonds, the orange juice and wine (or rum). Then fold in the matzah meal.

Finally, beat the egg whites until stiff, and fold in – a quarter at a time.

Pour into prepared cake tin and bake for about 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.

Remove from the oven, rest on a cake rack for about 10 minutes before inverting on to another cake rack. After another five minutes, release the springform. Allow to rest a little more before removing the springform. Carefully remove the baking paper.

Serve dusted with icing sugar.

This cake has the advantage of keeping for a few days – if it lasts.