

## frequent feasters



Ho Ho Hello!

I hope your festive season is shaping up to be fabulous one whatever you choose to do...whether it's spending time with family and friends, travelling or staying put, working or relaxing!

It's a great time to start planning new projects for next year and considering some New Year's resolutions.

In the meantime, take a few minutes to reflect upon and celebrate the year just gone, and enjoy a cuppa, a glass of bubbles (alcoholic or otherwise) or some delicious, refreshing iced tea, perhaps with a slice of my fruit cake on page two which is easy to make.

Wishing you the very best of seasons greetings!

Cheers!

Flip



### food in focus: peaches



Peaches are available from November until April but are best in mid-summer.

While there are over 100 different varieties of peaches we generally divide them between yellow and white, clingstone and freestone. As the name suggests, clingstone means the flesh will cling to the stone while freestone fruit slips or twists away from the stone easily.

They are delicious raw or served as the classic dish, Peach Melba, which consists of a half peach poached in syrup, served with a scoop of icecream and topped with raspberry puree. Mmmm.

Peaches have an interesting story. They originated in China and are mentioned in literature as early as 551 BC. In China the peach tree is considered the tree of life and the peach is a symbol of immortality and unity. Chinese brides carry peach blossom and peaches are always mentioned at birthdays. With such strong symbolism, no wonder we ask if everything is 'peachy'!

### do

More and more people are planning holidays around activities and one mob called Alltrails Bike Tours combine exercise and travel. Why not explore this great nation of ours and suck up the panoramic views from the seat of your bike....instead of the passenger seat of a car.

Phil and Susan McDonald run cycling tours all over Australia and in fact you can ride all around Australia – something I'd love to do one day! If you want more info check out [www.alltrails.com.au](http://www.alltrails.com.au).



### buy

#### what's in season during summer?

- Apricots
- Berries
- Cherries
- Mango
- Melons
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Passionfruit
- Peaches
- Pineapple
- Asparagus
- Avocado
- Capsicum
- Cucumber
- Sweetcorn
- Tomatoes
- Watercress
- Zucchini

Flip now writes a column for the Herald Sun which runs every second Saturday.

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### make

#### flip's loadsa fruit cake

This is fantastic to make and give as a gift, or store in the cupboard for when friends call around. My uncle, Frank, declared this cake to be "industrial strength" and a friend said it was "a meal in a slice" – both those comments I take as compliments, but you can make up your own mind.

#### stuff

800 grams dried fruit - apricots, raisins, Chilean Flame raisins, sultanas, apple, chopped (other options include dried, banana, mango, pawpaw, prunes, figs)

1 cup boiling water

1 cup freshly squeezed orange and lemon juice  
orange and lemon zest

¼ cup apricot jam (or marmalade)

1½ cups unbleached plain flour

¼ cup wholemeal flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon nutmeg

125 grams butter, cubed and at room temperature

2 eggs, beaten

additional water, if needed

¼ cup whole raw almonds

#### action

In a large bowl, place dried fruit, boiling water, orange and lemon juice and zest, apricot jam or marmalade and stir until well combined. Soak overnight so the fruit becomes plump.

Preheat the oven to 120 degrees/gas mark 2.

Line cake tin with grease proof paper.

Sift flours, spices and baking soda together.

Rub butter into flour until it resembles breadcrumbs.

Add eggs and mix well.

Stir in fruit mixture, making sure it is well combined and there are no lumps. (This is excellent work for the arm muscles)

Transfer mixture to the lined cake tin, leaving a small indentation in the middle.

Decorate with almonds.

Bake for about 2 hours, or until brown and a skewer comes out clean.

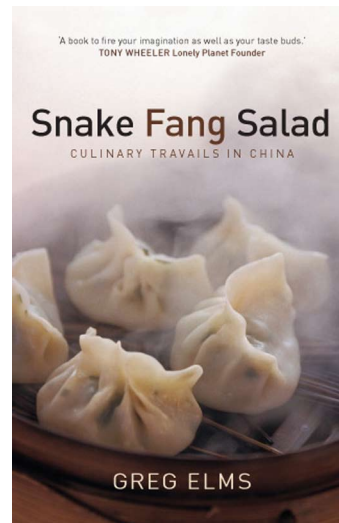
Allow cake to cool for 15-20 minutes in tin before removing and allowing to cool further on the wire rack.

*TIP: Replace some of the water with brandy for some festive cheer!*

### watch

Self declared kitchen goddess, Nigella Lawson's latest televisual feast is now screening on the ABC each Wednesday at 6.30pm. The show runs through until the middle of February. Each episode is based around a theme such as Crowd Pleasers or Weekend Wonders and Nigella has the uncanny knack of making cooking and entertaining a breeze. I love watching many cooking shows and share Nigella's passion for food but many of her meals contain enough calories to feed a small African nation for a day. Delicious but somewhat indulgent. Watch the portion sizes Nigella! By the way I am only slightly jealous of her job!

### read



Greg Elms - who took the gorgeous photos in my cookbook GREEN, has published a fabulous travelogue called "Snake Fang Salad" - a result of his years travelling as a Lonely Planet and magazine photographer for 15 years. (Yes indeed yet another job I'd love!). While Greg has travelled to over 30 countries on assignment this book focuses on China - and as he says

'the conundrums served with every meal!' It's now available in bookstores and via his website [www.gregelms.com](http://www.gregelms.com). A great chrispy present idea.

### the loadsa fruit cake!



"I hate housework. You make the bed, you do the dishes, and six months later you have to start all over again."  
Joan Rivers