



EGG BASKET ILLUSION CAKE BY JULIET SEAR

This cake will need a couple of days to make and carefully construct, so grab a cuppa and enjoy making your illusion masterpiece!

INGREDIENTS

9 inch cake baked using Clarence Court eggs, cut at a slight angle to mimic the shape of the rounded basket and covered in a layer of marzipan

1 kg of milk chocolate modelling paste

1 kg dark chocolate modelling paste

500g Dr. Oetker marzipan

1.5kg white sugar paste (you will have some excess left over)

Food colouring gels – Sugar Flair colours in Peach, Autumn Leaf, Caramel, Dark Brown, Baby Blue, Eucalyptus, Paprika/Flesh

Blue edible pen (e.g. Rainbow Dust)

2 packs of rice crispy square treats

Rolling pin

Icing sugar for dusting

300g melted Dr. Oetker Fine Cooks' Milk Chocolate

Pastry brush

Some heavy gauge floristry wire



METHOD

First make your shapes and allow to dry. We made 12x Clarence Court Free to Fly Quail Eggs, 6x Clarence Court Burford Brown Hen Eggs, 6x Clarence Court Leghorn Whites Hen Eggs, 6x Clarence Court Braddock White Duck Eggs and 6x Clarence Court Old Cotswold Legbar Hen Eggs.

CLARENCE COURT FREE TO FLY QUAIL EGGS

Make little egg shapes in your palms with a small amount of marzipan (approx. 20g per egg) and set aside to dry out overnight. Once dry create the unique egg speckles, to do this use a little brown and terracotta dusting powder mixed with a little melted cocoa butter, paint on the large blotches of colour in a random style and then add little speckles to the eggs to finish the look.





CLARENCE COURT QUAIL EGGS, BURFORD BROWNS, LEGHORN WHITES, BRADDOCK WHITES AND OLD COTSWOLD LEGBAR EGGS

Using rice crispie treats, make egg shapes by squashing them with your palms. The Burford Brown eggs and Cotswold Legbar eggs are smaller than the Leghorn Whites, and the Braddock White Duck eggs are particularly large.



Make the colours you need for the egg-shells by kneading up enough white sugar paste and marzipan per egg type. The Leghorn Whites were simply covered with white sugar paste. The Burford Browns are covered with approx. 40g marzipan per egg, use a mix of peach, dark brown, caramel and autumn leaf gel colours to achieve a brownish/terracotta shade.

The Cotswold Legbar eggs are made with a little eucalyptus and baby blue gel colour kneaded into sugar paste, with approx. 40g per egg.

The Braddock White Duck eggs have a lovely slight pinkish/flesh tint to the delicate shells, so knead in a touch of Paprika/ Flesh to around 50g white sugar paste per egg. As you make them, keep all colours in plastic bags while rolling out. Once all your colours are made, roll out the coverings to 2/3mm thickness, and cut out little squares, then wrap around each egg. Press these together to join around the egg, and trim off around the egg shape with some scissors. Mold gently by rolling in your palms to smooth away joins or cracks, and leave to set overnight on bubble wrap.





You might find a little dent on the underside where these dry, but this can be placed facing towards the bottom of the basket, so you have the perfect sides showing. Once these are dry you can apply the crown.

APPLYING THE CLARENCE COURT CROWN

To create a neat crown, it is best to carefully trace this on. Print out the crowns and trace over these with little pieces of white greaseproof paper using a soft lead-free pencil. Turn this over on top of the egg where you wish to mark the crown, and trace back over the lines with a sharp pencil, so that the marking is slightly visible on the egg. This will help when you use the fine tip of a blue edible pen to draw over the fine crown design











THE BASKET

To create the basket effect, roll out little thin 'sausages' of milk and dark chocolate modelling paste and twist into a wicker plait effect.



Brushing your cake shape with melted chocolate wrap the plaits around the basket continuously to build up all the way around the edge of the cake.







Once you come to the top of your cake, make a 3 strand plait with 'sausages' of the chocolate paste to go all around the top edge. Twist some heavy floristry wire together to make a strong lengthy wire for your handle and aid structure for your final plait of chocolate. Plunge each end of the wired handle into the cake within the outer basket weave, pushing this right down into the cake to create the arch. Make either a 3 or 4 strand plait the full length to go right over the basket. Paint the wire with chocolate and press the plait on the wire, allowing the plait to go slightly over the edges, trimming the excess, and pushing in the ends to create the basket handle.

To add more texture you can use a knife or modelling tool to add little lines to the chocolate weave by carving in one direction. Leave the basket to set and then fill with your array of fabulous illusion eggs.





