

**Cupcakes**

2/3 cups (480 g) candied cherries, coarsely chopped  
 1 1/2 cups (240 g) mixed peel  
 2 cups (360 g) raisins  
 1 cup (180 g) currants  
 1 cup (180 g) dates, coarsely chopped  
 3/4 cup (120 g) slivered almonds  
 1/2 cup (125 ml) brandy  
 2 1/2 cups (375 g) all-purpose (plain) flour  
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate of soda)

1 teaspoon ground cloves  
 1 teaspoon pumpkin spice  
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 1 cup (250 g) butter, softened  
 2 cups (400 g) firmly packed light brown sugar  
 6 large eggs, lightly beaten  
 3/4 cup (180 ml) light molasses  
 3/4 cup (180 ml) apple juice

**To Decorate**

1 cup (150 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar  
 2 kg white prepared fondant  
 1/8 teaspoon red food coloring  
 1/8 teaspoon blue food coloring  
 1 cup (325 g) orange marmalade, warmed and strained

Black ribbon, to decorate  
 Purple ribbon, to decorate  
 White ribbon, to decorate

**HAPPILY EVER AFTER CUPCAKES**

**Cupcakes:** Preheat the oven to 275°F (140°C/gas 1). • Line four 12-cup muffin pans with 40 paper baking cups. • Combine the cherries, mixed peel, raisins, currants, dates, and slivered almonds in a medium bowl. Pour the brandy over the fruit and leave to plump for a minimum of two hours or ideally overnight. • Stir 1/2 cup (75 g) of the flour through the soaked fruit. • Sift the remaining flour, baking soda, ground cloves, pumpkin spice, cinnamon, and salt into a small bowl. • Beat the butter and sugar in a medium bowl with an electric mixer on medium-high speed until pale and creamy. • Add the eggs in one at a time, beating until just blended after each addition. • With mixer on low speed, gradually add the mixed dry ingredients, molasses and apple

juice. • Spoon the batter into the prepared cups, filling each one to the top, as the mixture does not rise very much. • Bake for 40-45 minutes, until golden brown and firm to the touch. • Place on a rack and let cool completely. • **To Decorate:** Dust a clean work surface with confectioners' sugar and knead the prepared fondant until smooth. Roll out to 1/2 inch (5 mm) thick. Cut out rounds, using a small sharp knife, big enough to cover the entire cakes. • Remove the papers from the cupcakes and brush with marmalade. Place the fondant rounds on top. Smooth over the edges and trim the base to size. Tie the ribbon over the cupcakes and arrange on a large cake board or tiered cake stand.

