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Sunday, September 16, 2012

Monkey Brain Cake with Jelly Brain Tutorial



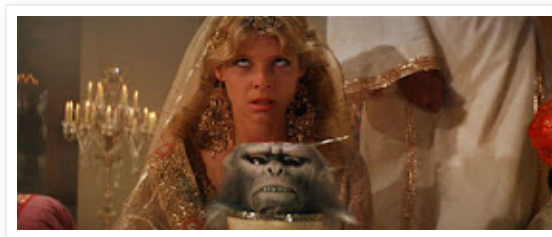
I know y'all are going to think I am somehow not equitable with my kids seeings as how this is my son's 4th birthday cake.

Yup the girls get pink princesses, fairies, butterflies and pastel birdhouse parties and the boy getsmonkey brains.



Bubble doing her best woozy fainting impression :)

Seriously, it was all his idea. It is inspired by a scene in Indiana Jones where they served chilled monkey brains and he has been asking for monkey brain cake for months now.



So I decided to make him exactly what he asked for.

I was a little worried after I finished the hand painting. It looked a bit creepy and I thought he wouldn't want it anymore and switch over to wanting a wiggles cake. But he totally LOVED it.



Awe - the look of love, my little destroyer is besotted

I made it the night before his party and the next morning he ran over as soon as he woke up and asked to see his monkey brain cake.

The cake is actually chocolate mud cake filled with milk chocolate ganache, the features are shaped mostly out of cake truffle (like the centers of cake pops) and then covered in ready rolled fondant. The brain is jelly (jello) made with evaporated (carnation) milk and then topped with some raspberry sauce.



Almost gone - this picture shows a good cross section of the truffle mouth and nose

The Jelly brain and raspberry sauce should be added just before serving. Also the fairy floss hair if you are using it needs to be added at the last second as it quickly succumbs to any humidity.



As well as a birthday cake it would make a perfect Halloween cake....make it in green change the eyes and you have a perfect zombie brain cake.

Or you could ditch the cake and just go with the jelly brain and sauce for an easier version.



**So anyway some people were grossed out by my sneak peek a couple of days ago and I know this is not my usual style so apologies to anyone who finds this unappetizing :) In this household we don't eat real brains monkey or otherwise, but it seems we will eat cake and jelly in most forms...um except those kinda R rated sexy ones.

I picked my Jelly Brain mold up from Ebay and Persian fairy floss is available from good deli's

Monkey Brain Cake tutorial

2 chocolate mud cakes (mine were 20cm X 8 cm pr 8" X 3.25")

Ganache (chocolate and cream)

Ready rolled fondant grey and a small amount of black

Black and white food color

Tylose powder

small brush

black dusting powder and large brush

Large rolling pin

small sharp knife

small fondant rolling pin

cake decorating veining tool

Cake smoothers (kinda optional)

edible glue

Brain mold

2 packs jelly (I used raspberry and grape)

evaporated low fat milk (carnation non fat)

Powdered gelatine

oil spray

Raspberry sauce (or strawberry)

Optional White persian fairy floss and scissors

Cut off the tops of the cakes to make them even. and then cut each cake in half.



Place the first cake on top of a cake board and then add a good dollop of ganache and spread it around evenly.



Place another layer of cake on top, then more ganache, then another layer of cake.



Repeat until you have four layers of cake with a layer of ganache between each layer.



Cover with a layer of plastic wrap and place in fridge and chill until firm.

Using the knife carve the cake into shape see the picture for guidance. You will need to carve off the front sides to make a 'skull type shape, tapering in towards the bottom. (Do not discard the pieces you carve off reserve them for use) Then about an 1.5cm (3/4") off the front (the top layer) for the eye/ eyebrow area.



Cover the carved cake with a layer of ganache and make as smooth as possible. If necessary you may need to do this in more than one stage by covering in ganache, smoothing with a hot knife or spatula and then repeating the process. Make the top of the cake as smooth and flat as possible.



Cover the cake with ganache - ok this is not a wedding cake no need to go overboard - I just made it kinda smooth, I was actually just using a bread knife to spread the ganach.

Take the reserved offcuts of the cake and add enough extra ganache to make a smooth truffle mixture.



Take one piece of truffle around a couple of teaspoons and press onto the front of the cake to make a nose. Using your fingertips shape into a nose with nostrils. Take another larger truffle piece and press into the front of the cake to make an oval shaped mouth protruding from the bottom center of the cake. See the picture for guidance. Cover the mouth and nose detail with a thin layer of ganache.



Roll another couple of pieces of truffle mixture and make shapes that are half circles, around the size of half a ping pong ball, these truffles will be the eyes.

Knead the black fondant, you will only need a small amount of a couple of tablespoons. Place a small amount of vegetable fat on your workbench and roll out the fondant with a small plastic rolling pin. Cut out a shape to cover the mouth section of the cake. Use the remaining black fondant to cover the half circles of truffle 'eyes'.

Knead fondant until smooth and add in a little black to make the fondant grey and tylose powder to make the fondant stronger. Knead until the color is well distributed and even. Take a couple of tablespoons of the grey fondant and roll out with a small rolling pin until quite thin at one side but with a thicker rim around 1cm wide (the lip) around 8cm (3.25") long and wrap around the front bottom of the cake to make a bottom lip.



Push it into place under the chin area and using a sharp knife trim off any excess. Use the veining tool to mark indents along the lip area to look like creases in the skin.



Take a small amount of white fondant about 1 Tablespoon and shape small uneven ovals and press onto the mouth area just above the lip. If you like use a tool to mark 'decay' lines in the teeth.



Measure around your cake and then the height of your cake. Add another 1.5cm (1/2") to each measurement and that will be the size fondant rectangle you will need. Dust the workbench with a little cornflour (corn starch) and using a large rolling pin roll out the fondant until quite thin in a long rectangle that is at least as long and wide as your measurements. Use a sharp knife (or pizza cutter) to cut the rectangle to the required size.



In the middle section of the fondant at the bottom cut out a half circle that will be the open mouth area. around 6 cm at the biggest and tapering down to be 12cm wide.

Working quickly wrap the grey fondant around the cake and join it together at the back trimming off any overhang where the fondant joins. There should be around 1.5 cm overhand around the top of the cake which is where the brain will sit. It will act as a dam to hold the brain and raspberry sauce.

I placed some foil in a couple of spots to hold up the fondant while it dried. Press the fondant into the eye socket areas and around the mouth, leaving enough black showing for the teeth to be inserted later. Make sure that the fondant covers the bottom of the cake evenly and no ganache is showing. Press around the nose area, using the veining tool press in the nostrils until you are happy with the shape. Add an indent with the back of the cake tool in the middle of the nose. The truffle mixture underneath should have a little give at this stage and you can still move it around a little to

get your desired shape.



Mix a small amount of the grey fondant with a little water to make a thick paste. Place a little paste onto the eye area and press in the eyes. If they are a little big, quickly remove them and trim until you are happy with the size.



Roll out a small amount of fondant and roll as thin as possible to make eyelids. Cut to shape and press onto the eyes covering the top half, using a cake tool smooth the edges as much as possible in the corners to make the join look as seamless as possible. Don't stress too much about the top it will be covered with the eyebrows.

Take another piece of fondant and shape it into a long log. Use a little more of the fondant mixed with water to 'glue' this log into place. Use the veining tool to shape the log into an eye brow. I made an indent on each side just above the nose and then used the sharp side of the tool to make long shallow strokes in the fondant to look like hair. Place a food safe item between the eye and brow to hold in place while it dries (I used some folded foil).



Make more long shallow 'hair' indents in the fondant around the cheek area. Then use the same technique using shorter strokes to give the lips texture.

Using a brush paint on a very sheer small amount of white food color to the lip, upper cheek (under the eyes) and middle brow area.

Allow to dry for a while until the fondant is firm to touch.

Optional - paint of some edible glaze to the eyes to make them shiny. I mixed my glaze with some black food color to give it a deep look.



Use a another brush to paint in the nostrils and the eyelid area with black food color. Take a very thin (eg 00) brush and carefully paint in the long shallow indents you have made around the eyebrow area.

Take a large full brush and add black dusting powder to the cheek areas, similar to the way you would apply makeup blush. I added some black dusting powder around the eye areas and nose center as well.



Mix a very small amount of ivory color with white and paint around the teeth to give a decayed look.



Roll out a very thin rope of grey fondant. Add to the very edge of the eyelid where it meets the eye.

Make the jelly brain. (I made the jelly very firm so it would hold during slicing if you prefer you can omit the extra gelatine and or add more liquid)



Pour 2 packets of jelly (I used one grape and one raspberry) into a large bowl with 3 teaspoons of powdered gelatine.

Add one cup of boiling water and then 1 cup of evaporated low fat milk.



Spray the brain mold with a little oil and pour the jelly into the mold. I checked on the cake to see how large the brain cavity would be and only filled the mold up to that spot which was around half filled - I didn't quite use all the jelly mixture. Pop in fridge until required. You can make the day before serving.



To serve, unmold the jelly and place in the 'brain' cavity of the cake. Pour a little raspberry sauce over the top of the brain.

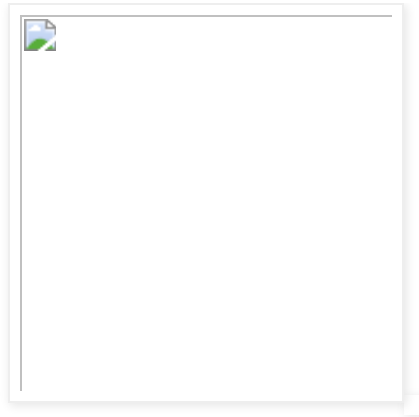


Optional - If you will be adding fairy floss hair work quickly to brush on a small amount of edible glue to the edge of the eyebrows and cheek area. Separate the fairy floss as much as possible, cut to length with scissors and gently press onto the edible glue. Serve immediately.



Linda Vandermeer is a blogger, baker, maker and author of the cookbook 'Sweets on a Stick': More than 150 kid friendly recipes for cakes, candies, cookies and pies on the go!. Published in the US the book is available at most online book stores:

[Link to Amazon:](#)



[Sweets on a Stick: More Than 150 Kid-Friendly Recipes for Cakes, Candies, Cookies, and Pies on the Go!](#)

Or at Fishpond (free shipping Australia)



[Sweets on a Stick: More Than 150 Kid-Friendly Recipes for Cakes, Candies, Cookies, and Pies on the Go!](#)

Linda McCubbin at 6:10 PM

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28 comments:



Unknown September 16, 2012 at 8:54 PM

what a fantastic tutorial. Love the cake, so perfect for Halloween festivities. Thanks for taking the time to put this post together.

[Reply](#)



Unknown September 16, 2012 at 9:21 PM

Wow! this looks AMAZING! Can't wait to try this out at Halloween

[Reply](#)

Jelly Cruz September 17, 2012 at 12:32 AM

Definitely a must try this halloween! Love especially the idea about the jelly brain. I'm trying that part for desert tomorrow.

[Reply](#)



Little Blue Mouse September 17, 2012 at 6:44AM

I saw your photo on the side bar over at Suburban Jubilee and had to come over for a better view.

Oh my, it's so gross - and I mean that in the nicest possible way!

[Reply](#)



Vero September 17, 2012 at 7:44AM

Wowwww!!! Incredible! It's a fantastic and terrifying cake! :)
Thanks!!!

[Reply](#)



Not Quite Nigella September 17, 2012 at 8:38 PM

Linda, this is fantastic! I was thinking of something similar but different for Halloween ;) I love seeing how he took shape too! :D

[Reply](#)



Julia G September 17, 2012 at 9:41 PM

I knew what it was right away, so I wasn't grossed out - just impressed!
Love the look on Bubble's face! And glad Mr 4 was so happy with his cake. Well done!

[Reply](#)

Lora September 18, 2012 at 2:33AM

What a fabulous and creative cake! Love it! Also perfect for Halloween.

[Reply](#)

check this out September 18, 2012 at 8:48 PM

Scary cake.

[Reply](#)

nikatblogsite September 20, 2012 at 1:50 PM

This comment has been removed by a blog administrator.

[Reply](#)**Debra Kapellakis** October 3, 2012 at 9:23 PM

Ugly horrible gross, and absolutely positively amazingly perfect for Halloween! BRAVO! thank you for sharing :D

[Reply](#)**Claudia** October 11, 2012 at 11:59 AM

How do you flip the jello onto the cake without the jello breaking.?

[Reply](#)

Replies

**Linda McCubbin** October 11, 2012 at 12:21 PM

Hi - I made the jello very thick - in the recipe I gave I use about half the liquid recommended on a pack and then I added extra gelatine. You can pick my brains up with your hand if you like. I unmolded onto a plate and then picked it up with clean hands and quickly placed in into the head cavity.

[Reply](#)**Lisa Russell** October 21, 2012 at 9:19 PM

This is insanely awesome!! Excellent job!

[Reply](#)**Brittany Schwaigert** October 27, 2012 at 5:00 AM

THis makes me SO happy. SO creative and fun!

[Reply](#)**linnellbelle** October 28, 2012 at 7:07 AM

That is AWESOME!!!! My kids are so jealous! They'd LOVE to have a monkey brain cake to eat. (Personally I'd love to eat the chocolate cake with ganache...but I'm not too sure about the monkey!) Thanks for sharing. I found you via Tip Junkie.

[Reply](#)**Anonymous** May 8, 2013 at 5:01 AM

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5TB-Bi3f0Q>

[Reply](#)

Replies

Anonymous [May 8, 2013 at 5:09 AM](#)

I was gonna post that too. The original poster should have way more credit for this idea!!!

Anonymous [May 8, 2013 at 2:41 PM](#)

i'm not sure, but i suspect this was actually the original blogger ...
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0033SyoVnU>



Linda McCubbin [May 8, 2013 at 3:04 PM](#)

Thanks for letting me know that Nerdy Nummies has been inspired by this post. I noticed Rosanna mentioned this blog as the inspiration and has popped a link in her comments so people can find there way here.



Linda McCubbin [May 8, 2013 at 3:10 PM](#)

Thanks Anonymous, yes 'how to cook that' did a version as well - but you might notice that my sneak peek came out before the you tube video was posted :) Also they did not use a jello brain like I did. Thanks for popping by.

[Reply](#)



Unknown [May 8, 2013 at 5:34 AM](#)

This was linked from Nerdie Nummies. You did such an amazing job, now subbed to your blog :)

[Reply](#)



Bake-A-Holics Anonymous [June 27, 2013 at 8:33 AM](#)

AWESOMMMMMMEEEEEE Cake ! what is the hair made out of ? this cake is epic ! thank u for sharing

[Reply](#)

Replies



Linda McCubbin [June 27, 2013 at 10:00 AM](#)

Thanks so much :) The hair is made out of Persian fairy floss (fairy floss also known as cotton candy).

[Reply](#)

Anonymous [November 15, 2013 at 4:06 AM](#)

What a great way to “cutesy” up a cruel and utterly inhumane culinary practice. Do you also have your child pretend to kill it by smashing the monkey in the head with a mallet (which is how they kill the monkey)? FUN for the whole family!

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)



Linda McCubbin [November 15, 2013 at 5:32 AM](#)

Thanks my point exactly. Eat cake not monkeys :)

[Reply](#)

Unknown [October 12, 2016 at 8:30 PM](#)

This really made me smile :) I was looking for a recipe for a jelly brain (ie how to get the right kind of colour) and this is so much cooler than i expected!

[Reply](#)

GothyKitty [September 2, 2021 at 9:06 PM](#)

wow so cool

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Linda McCubbin

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