

Over-sized Rhubarb and Custard Scone

400g self-raising flour
35g Bird's custard powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
125g cold unsalted butter, diced
125g caster sugar
1 large egg, beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
225-250ml buttermilk
50-75ml fresh custard
1-2 white sugar cubes, crushed

For the rhubarb

200g rhubarb, cut into 3cm lengths
50g caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Put the rhubarb in a large frying pan with the sugar, vanilla and 1 tablespoon of water – it should be in a single layer so that it cooks evenly. Cover with a lid and heat gently until the sugar has completely dissolved. Then increase the heat to medium and cook for 3-5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the rhubarb is just tender but still keeping its shape. Tip into a dish and set aside to cool. When cool, strain in a sieve over a bowl, reserving the syrup.

Pre-heat the oven to 220C. Sift the flour into a large bowl with the custard powder and baking powder. Mix well, then add the butter and, using your fingertips, rub it into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar. Make a well in the centre and stir in the egg, vanilla and 225ml buttermilk with a round-bladed knife until the dough begins to come together, adding a little more buttermilk if needed – it should be quite sticky. Tip out onto a lightly floured surface and briefly shape into a slightly domed round about 20cm in diameter, 3cm thick, being careful not to over-work it. Transfer to a greased baking sheet. Using the handle of a wooden spoon, floured, lightly press about 20 holes into the dough (about halfway down), then spoon the fresh custard in. Top with the rhubarb and scatter over the sugar. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until risen and golden.

Pour the reserved rhubarb syrup into a small pan, bring to the boil and simmer for 3-4 minutes until reduced and slightly thickened; leave to cool. Leave the scone to cool for at least 15 minutes on the baking sheet, before drizzling with the extra rhubarb syrup. Cut into wedges and serve with extra custard, if liked.

