Lemon and Thyme flavoured Muffins with Vodka Lemon syrup

Makes about 12 - 14 muffins.
The quantities can easily be halved, and they freeze well if you make a large batch.

- 140 g (5 oz) butter - softened at room temperature
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 280 g (10 oz) sugar
- 6 eggs - at room temperature
- 280 g (10 oz) plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 3 tbs lemon zest
- 1½ tbs finely chopped thyme leaves

For the syrup

- 50 g (2 oz) sugar
- 50 ml lemon juice
- 50 ml vodka

Preheat the oven to 160°C - 140°C fan - 325°F - Gas 3.

In a large mixing bowl beat together the butter, sugar and lemon juice until the mixture is pale and fluffy. An electric mixer is a great help. Gradually beat in the eggs, one at a time, making sure that each is well mixed in before you add the next.

In another bowl mix together the remaining dry ingredients for the muffins. Add this a little at a time to the whisked butter and egg mix until everything is well combined.

Check your beater blades when you have finished as, if your zest is in longish strips, then some may well have wound themselves around the blades and will need to be scraped off back into the muffin mix.

Spoon the muffin mix into paper muffin cases in a muffin tin, filling each about ¾ full as they will rise when baked. Bake for 30 minutes until golden brown.

TIP - The muffin cases are best if baked in a muffin tin as this prevents the cases from spreading during baking. If you don't have a deep muffin tin then use an ordinary shallower bun tin and use double muffin cases to give a bit more support.

Whilst the muffins are baking make the syrup, heat the ingredients in a small saucepan until boiling, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Keep warm until the muffins are ready.

Whilst the muffins are hot, brush the tops repeatedly with warm syrup to flavour and glaze them.

Cool and serve!