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Chocolate Angel Food Cake

Source: Cook's Country, Aug/Sept 2009

<https://www.cookscountry.com/recipes/4825-chocolate-almond-angel-food-cake>

Ingredients

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons cake flour (4 1/2 ounces) (see note)

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 3/4 cups granulated sugar (12 1/4 ounces)

12 large egg whites

1 1/2 teaspoons cream of tartar

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon almond extract

2 ounces bittersweet chocolate (finely grated)

Instructions

Do not use all-purpose flour. Our tasters unflatteringly compared a cake made with it to Wonder Bread. If your angel food cake pan does not have a removable bottom, line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper. In either case, do not grease the pan (or the paper).

1. PROCESS SUGAR Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and preheat oven to 325 degrees. Whisk flour and salt in bowl. Process sugar in food processor until fine and powdery, about 1 minute. Reserve half of sugar in small bowl. Add flour mixture to food processor with remaining sugar and process until aerated, about 1 minute.

2. BEAT WHITES With electric mixer on medium-low speed, beat egg whites and cream of tartar until frothy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium-high. With motor running, slowly add reserved sugar and beat until soft peaks form, about 6 minutes. Add vanilla and almond extracts and mix until incorporated.

3. SIFT AND FOLD Sift flour mixture over egg whites in 3 additions, folding gently with rubber spatula after each addition until incorporated. Fold in bittersweet chocolate. Scrape mixture into 12-cup ungreased tube pan.

4. BAKE Bake until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean and cracks in cake appear dry, 40 to 45 minutes. Cool, inverted, to room temperature, about 3 hours. To unmold, run knife along interior of pan. Turn out onto platter. Serve.

Yellow Layer Cake

Source: Cook's Illustrated, March 2008

https://www.cooksillustrated.com/recipes/4142-fluffy-yellow-layer-cake?incode=MCSCD00L0&ref=new_search_experience_1

Ingredients

CAKE

2½ cups cake flour, plus extra for dusting pans
1¼ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon table salt
1¾ cups sugar (12 1/4 ounces)
10 tablespoons (1 1/4 sticks) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
1 cup buttermilk, room temperature
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
6 large egg yolks, room temperature
3 large egg whites, room temperature

FROSTING

20 tablespoons (2 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened (60 to 65 degrees)
1 cup confectioners' sugar (4 ounces)
¾ cup Dutch-processed cocoa
pinch table salt
¾ cup light corn syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
8 ounces milk chocolate, melted and cooled slightly (see note)

Instructions

Cake

Nonstick cooking spray can be used for greasing the pans (proceed with flouring as directed). Bring all ingredients to room temperature before beginning. Frost the cake with our Foolproof Chocolate Frosting (see related recipe) or your favorite topping.

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease two 9-inch-wide by 2-inch-high round cake pans and line bottoms with parchment paper. Grease paper rounds, dust pans with flour, and knock out excess. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and 1 1/2 cups sugar together in large bowl. In 4-cup liquid measuring cup or medium bowl, whisk together melted butter, buttermilk, oil, vanilla, and yolks.

2. In clean bowl of stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment, beat egg whites at medium-high speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. With machine running, gradually add remaining 1/4 cup sugar; continue to beat until stiff peaks just form, 30 to 60 seconds (whites should hold peak but mixture should appear moist). Transfer to bowl and set aside.

3. Add flour mixture to now-empty mixing bowl fitted with whisk attachment. With mixer running at low speed, gradually pour in butter mixture and mix until almost incorporated (a few streaks of dry flour will remain), about 15 seconds. Stop mixer and scrape whisk and sides of bowl. Return mixer to medium-low speed and beat until smooth and fully incorporated, 10 to 15 seconds.

4. Using rubber spatula, stir 1/3 of whites into batter to lighten, then add remaining whites and gently fold into batter until no white streaks remain. Divide batter evenly between prepared cake pans. Lightly tap pans against counter 2 or 3 times to dislodge any large air bubbles.

5. Bake until cake layers begin to pull away from sides of pans and toothpick inserted into center comes out clean, 20 to 22 minutes. Cool cakes in pans on wire rack for 10 minutes. Loosen cakes from sides of pans with small knife, then invert onto greased wire rack and peel off parchment. Invert cakes again and cool completely on rack, about 1 1/2 hours.

For High-Altitude Baking Problem: Chemically leavened cakes sink in the center. **Solutions:** Use less baking powder and/or baking soda. Increase the oven temperature and decrease the baking time. **Problem:** Egg-leavened cakes sink in the center. **Solutions:** Underwhip the whites and/or whole eggs. Increase the oven temperature and decrease the baking time. **Problem:** Cakes are dry and cottony. **Solution:** Use less sugar and/or add an extra egg. **Problem:** Cakes are greasy. **Solution:** Add an extra tablespoon or two of flour.

Frosting

This frosting may be made with milk, semisweet, or bittersweet chocolate. For our Fluffy Yellow Layer Cake (see related recipe), we prefer a frosting made with milk chocolate. Cool the chocolate to between 85 and 100 degrees before adding it to the butter mixture. The frosting can be made 3 hours in advance. For longer storage, refrigerate the frosting, covered, and let it stand at room temperature for 1 hour before using.

In food processor, process butter, sugar, cocoa, and salt until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping sides of bowl as needed. Add corn syrup and vanilla and process until just combined, 5 to 10 seconds. Scrape sides of bowl, then add chocolate and pulse until smooth and creamy, 10 to 15 seconds. Frosting can be used immediately or held (see note).

In food processor, process butter, sugar, cocoa, and salt until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping sides of bowl as needed. Add corn syrup and vanilla and process until just combined, 5 to 10 seconds. Scrape sides of bowl, then add chocolate and pulse until smooth and creamy, 10 to 15 seconds. Frosting can be used immediately or held (see note).

Pear-Walnut Upsidedown Cake

Source: Cook's Illustrated January 2016

https://www.cooksillustrated.com/recipes/8659-pear-walnut-upside-down-cake?incode=MCSCD00L0&ref=new_search_experience_2

Ingredients

Topping

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
½ cup packed (3 1/2 ounces) dark brown sugar
2 teaspoons cornstarch
⅛ teaspoon salt
3 ripe but firm Bosc pears (8 ounces each)

Cake

1 cup walnuts, toasted
½ cup (2 1/2 ounces) all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon baking powder
⅛ teaspoon baking soda
3 large eggs
1 cup (7 ounces) sugar
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
¼ cup vegetable oil

Instructions

We strongly recommend baking this cake in a light-colored cake pan with sides that are at least 2 inches tall. If using a dark-colored pan, start checking for doneness at 1 hour, and note that the cake may dome in the center and the topping may become too sticky. Serve with crème fraîche, lightly sweetened whipped cream, or our Yogurt Whipped Topping (see related content).

1. FOR THE TOPPING: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees. Grease 9-inch round cake pan and line bottom with parchment paper. Pour melted butter over bottom of pan and swirl to evenly coat. Combine sugar, cornstarch, and salt in small bowl and sprinkle evenly over melted butter.

2. Peel, halve, and core pears. Set aside 1 pear half and reserve for other use. Cut remaining 5 pear halves into 4 wedges each. Arrange pears in circular pattern around cake pan with tapered

ends pointing inward. Arrange two smallest pear wedges in center.

3. FOR THE CAKE: Pulse walnuts, flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda in food processor until walnuts are finely ground, 8 to 10 pulses. Transfer walnut mixture to bowl.

4. Process eggs and sugar in now-empty processor until very pale yellow, about 2 minutes. With processor running, add melted butter and oil in steady stream until incorporated. Add walnut mixture and pulse to combine, 4 to 5 pulses. Pour batter evenly over pears (some pear may show through; cake will bake up over fruit).

5. Bake until center of cake is set and bounces back when gently pressed and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 1 hour 10 minutes to 1 1/4 hours, rotating pan after 40 minutes. Let cake cool in pan on wire rack for 15 minutes. Carefully run paring knife or offset spatula around sides of pan. Invert cake onto wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet; discard parchment. Let cake cool for about 2 hours. Transfer to serving platter, cut into wedges, and serve.

Flourless Chocolate Cake

Source: Cook's Country, Apr/May 2016

Ingredients

Cake

12 ounces bittersweet chocolate, broken into 1-inch pieces
16 tablespoons unsalted butter
6 large eggs
1 cup (7 ounces) sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Salt

Whipped Cream

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream, chilled
2 teaspoons sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions

Plan ahead: This cake needs to chill for at least 6 hours, so we recommend making it the day before serving. An accurate oven thermometer is essential here. Our preferred bittersweet chocolate is Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Premium Baking Bar. Top the cake with chocolate shavings, if desired; to make shavings, simply shave bittersweet bar chocolate with a vegetable peeler.

1. FOR THE CAKE: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 275 degrees. Spray 9-inch springform pan with vegetable oil spray. Microwave chocolate and butter in bowl at 50 percent power, stirring occasionally with rubber spatula, until melted, about 4 minutes. Let chocolate mixture cool for 5 minutes.

2. Whisk eggs, sugar, water, cornstarch, vanilla, espresso powder, and salt together in large bowl until thoroughly combined, about 30 seconds. Whisk in chocolate mixture until smooth and slightly thickened, about 45 seconds. Strain batter through fine-mesh strainer into prepared pan, pressing against strainer with rubber spatula or back of ladle to help batter pass through.

3. Gently tap pan on counter to release air bubbles; then let sit on counter for 10 minutes to allow air bubbles to rise to top. Use tines of fork to gently pop any air bubbles that have risen to surface. Bake until edges are set and center jiggles slightly when cake is shaken gently, 45 to 50 minutes. Let cake cool for 5 minutes, then run paring knife between cake and sides of pan.

4. Let cake cool in pan on wire rack until barely warm, about 30 minutes. Cover cake tightly with plastic wrap, poke small hole in top, and refrigerate until cold and firmly set, at least 6 hours.

5. FOR THE WHIPPED CREAM: Using stand mixer fitted with whisk, whip cream, sugar, and vanilla on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to high and whip until stiff peaks form, 1 to 3 minutes.

6. To unmold cake, remove sides of pan and slide thin metal spatula between cake bottom and pan bottom to loosen, then slide cake onto serving platter. Let cake stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Slice with warm, dry knife. Top slices with whipped cream and serve.

Chocolate-Caramel Layer Cake

Source: Cook's Illustrated September 2015

Ingredients

Cake

1½ cups (7 1/2 ounces) all-purpose flour
¾ cup (2 1/4 ounces) unsweetened cocoa powder
1½ cups (10 1/2 ounces) granulated sugar
1¼ teaspoons baking soda
¾ teaspoon baking powder
¾ teaspoon salt
¾ cup buttermilk
½ cup water
¼ cup vegetable oil
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Caramel Filling

1¼ cups (8 3/4 ounces) granulated sugar
¼ cup light corn syrup
¼ cup water
1 cup heavy cream
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¾ teaspoon salt

Frosting

16 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
¾ cup (3 ounces) confectioners' sugar
½ cup (1 1/2 ounces) unsweetened cocoa powder

Pinch salt

½ cup light corn syrup
¾ teaspoon vanilla extract
6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled
¼—1; teaspoon coarse sea salt (optional)

Instructions

Baking spray that contains flour can be used to grease and flour the pans. Both natural and Dutch-

processed cocoa will work in this recipe. When taking the temperature of the caramel in steps 3 and 4, remove the pot from the heat and tilt the pan to one side. Use your thermometer to stir the caramel back and forth to equalize hot and cool spots and make sure you are getting an accurate reading.

1. FOR THE CAKE: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Grease two 9-inch round cake pans, line with parchment paper, grease parchment, and flour pans. Sift flour and cocoa into large bowl. Whisk in sugar, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Whisk buttermilk, water, oil, eggs, and vanilla together in second bowl. Whisk buttermilk mixture into flour mixture until smooth batter forms. Divide batter evenly between prepared pans and smooth tops with rubber spatula.

2. Bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 22 to 28 minutes, switching and rotating pans halfway through baking. Let cakes cool in pans on wire rack for 15 minutes. Remove cakes from pans, discarding parchment, and let cool completely on rack, at least 2 hours.

3. FOR THE CARAMEL FILLING: Lightly grease 8-inch square baking pan. Combine sugar, corn syrup, and water in medium saucepan. Bring to boil over medium-high heat and cook, without stirring, until mixture is amber colored, 8 to 10 minutes. Reduce heat to low and continue to cook, swirling saucepan occasionally, until dark amber, 2 to 5 minutes longer. (Caramel will register between 375 and 380 degrees.)

4. Off heat, carefully stir in cream, butter, vanilla, and salt (mixture will bubble and steam). Return saucepan to medium heat and cook, stirring frequently, until smooth and caramel reaches 240 to 245 degrees, 3 to 5 minutes. Carefully transfer caramel to prepared pan and let cool until just warm to touch (100 to 105 degrees), 20 to 30 minutes.

5. FOR THE FROSTING: Process butter, sugar, cocoa, and salt in food processor until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Add corn syrup and vanilla and process until just combined, 5 to 10 seconds. Scrape down sides of bowl, then add chocolate and pulse until smooth and creamy, 10 to 15 seconds. (Frosting can be made 3 hours in advance. For longer storage, cover and refrigerate frosting. Let stand at room temperature for 1 hour before using.)

6. Using long serrated knife, score 1 horizontal line around sides of each cake layer; then, following scored lines, cut each layer into 2 even layers.

7. Using rubber spatula or large spoon, transfer 1/3 of caramel to center of 1 cake layer and use small offset spatula to spread over surface, leaving 1/2-inch border around edge. Repeat with remaining caramel and 2 of remaining cake layers. (Three of your cake layers should be topped with caramel.)

8. Line edges of cake platter with 4 strips of parchment to keep platter clean. Place 1 caramel-covered cake layer on platter. Top with second caramel-covered layer. Repeat with third caramel-covered layer and top with final layer. Spread frosting evenly over sides and top of cake. Carefully remove parchment strips. Let cake stand for at least 1 hour. (Cake can be made 2 days in advance

and refrigerated. Let stand at room temperature for at least 5 hours before serving.) Sprinkle with coarse sea salt, if using. Cut and serve.

Don't Be Afraid of Caramel

Caramel is simply sugar (sucrose) that's been heated until it melts, browns, and develops complex flavor. You can use it to make a fluid caramel sauce or chewy or hard candy by adding cream, butter, and other flavorings. The longer the mixture cooks, the more water will evaporate and the stiffer the caramel will become.

Though caramel gets a bad rap for being finicky to make, with the right recipe, it's easy to overcome its two main pitfalls: The sugar can melt unevenly and burn, or it can seize up and crystallize. The latter happens when some of the sucrose molecules are not hot enough to melt and break down into glucose and fructose and instead bond, creating a grainy texture. Here's what we do to make a caramel that works.

Italian Cream Cake

Source: Cook's Country Aug/Sept 2011

Ingredients

Cake

1 ½ cups sweetened shredded coconut, toasted
1 cup buttermilk, room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2½ cups (10 ounces) cake flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
¾ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
12 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 12 pieces and softened
4 tablespoons vegetable shortening, cut into 4 pieces
1¾ cups (12 1/4 ounces) sugar
5 large eggs, room temperature
2 cups (8 ounces) pecans, toasted and chopped

Frosting

12 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
2 ¼ cups (9 ounces) confectioners' sugar
½ cup cream of coconut
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
pinch salt
16 ounces cream cheese, cut into 8 pieces and softened

Instructions

Toast the coconut and nuts in a 350-degree oven until golden brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Watch carefully and stir occasionally to prevent burning.

1. For the cake: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease two 9-inch round cake pans, line with parchment paper, grease parchment, then flour pans. Process coconut in food processor until finely ground, about 1 minute. Combine coconut, buttermilk, and vanilla in 2-cup liquid measuring cup and let sit until coconut is slightly softened, about 10 minutes; reserve.

2. Combine flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in bowl. Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat butter, shortening, and sugar on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, and beat until combined. Reduce speed to low and add flour mixture in 3 additions, alternating with 2 additions of reserved coconut-buttermilk mixture, scraping down bowl as needed. Add ¾ cup pecans and give batter final stir by hand.

3. Scrape equal amounts of batter into prepared pans and bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 28 to 32 minutes. Cool cakes in pans on wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove cakes from pans, discarding parchment, and cool completely, about 2 hours. (Cooled cakes can be wrapped with plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for up to 2 days.)

4. For the frosting: Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, mix butter and sugar on low speed until combined, about 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium-high and beat until pale and fluffy, about

2 minutes. Add cream of coconut, vanilla, and salt and beat until smooth, about 30 seconds. Add cream cheese, one piece at a time, and beat until incorporated, about 1 minute. Refrigerate until ready to use.

5. When cakes are cooled, spread 1½ cups frosting over 1 cake round. Top with second cake round and spread remaining frosting evenly over top and sides of cake. Press remaining pecans onto sides of cake. Serve. (Cake can be refrigerated for up to 2 days. Bring to room temperature before serving.)

Banana-Chocolate Chip Snack Cake

Source: Cook's Country Jun/Jul 2017

https://www.cookscountry.com/recipes/9687-banana-chocolate-chip-snack-cake?extcode=MCSKD10L0&ref=new_search_experience_28

Ingredients

2 cups (10 ounces) all-purpose flour
¾ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1 ½ cups (10 1/2 ounces) sugar
2 large eggs
1 cup mashed ripe bananas (2 to 3 bananas)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup whole milk
1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips

Instructions

Ripe bananas contain nearly three times as much sugar as unripened bananas. Don't use anything less than speckled bananas in this recipe, or your cake will be bland. If you like, serve this cake frosted with Cream Cheese Frosting. Be sure to let the cake cool completely before frosting.

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 8-inch square baking pan. Whisk flour, salt, and baking soda together in bowl.
2. Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat butter and sugar on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, and beat until combined. Add bananas and vanilla and beat until incorporated.
3. Reduce speed to low and add flour mixture in 3 additions, alternating with milk in 2 additions, scraping down bowl as needed. Using rubber spatula, stir in ½ cup chocolate chips. Transfer batter to prepared pan and smooth top with rubber spatula. Sprinkle remaining ½ cup chocolate chips evenly over top. Bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking.
4. Let cake cool completely in pan on wire rack. Serve. (Cooled cake can be wrapped in plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for up to 2 days.)

Lemon Bundt Cake

Source: Cook's Illustrated January 2006

https://www.cooksillustrated.com/recipes/2811-lemon-bundt-cake?incode=MCSCD00L0&ref=new_search_experience_38

Ingredients

Cake

3 lemons, zest grated and saved, then juiced for 3 tablespoons juice (see note above)
3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour (15 ounces)
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon table salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¾ cup low-fat buttermilk (preferably)
3 large eggs, at room temperature
1 large egg yolk, at room temperature
18 tablespoons unsalted butter (2 1/4 sticks), at room temperature
2 cups sugar (14 ounces)

Glaze

2 - 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (see note above)
1 tablespoon buttermilk
2 cups confectioners' sugar (8 ounces)

Instructions

You will need between five and six tablespoons of lemon juice for this recipe. Because the amount of juice can vary from lemon to lemon, we suggest you first measure the juice from the three lemons you have zested, then juice a fourth lemon if necessary. Serve this cake as is or dress it up with lightly sweetened berries. The cake has a light, fluffy texture when eaten the day it is baked, but if well wrapped and held at room temperature overnight its texture becomes more dense—like that of pound cake—the following day.

1. **FOR THE CAKE:** Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position; heat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 12-cup Bundt pan with nonstick baking spray with flour (alternatively, brush pan with mixture of 1 tablespoon flour and 1 tablespoon melted butter). Mince lemon zest to fine paste (you should have about 2 tablespoons). Combine zest and lemon juice in small bowl; set aside to soften, 10 to 15 minutes.

2. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in large bowl. Combine lemon juice mixture, vanilla, and buttermilk in medium bowl. In small bowl, gently whisk eggs and yolk to combine. In

standing mixer fitted with flat beater, cream butter and sugar at medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes; scrape down sides of bowl with rubber spatula. Reduce to medium speed and add half of eggs, mixing until incorporated, about 15 seconds. Repeat with remaining eggs; scrape down bowl again. Reduce to low speed; add about one-third of flour mixture, followed by half of buttermilk mixture, mixing until just incorporated after each addition (about 5 seconds). Repeat using half of remaining flour mixture and all of remaining buttermilk mixture. Scrape bowl and add remaining flour mixture; mix at medium-low speed until batter is thoroughly combined, about 15 seconds. Remove bowl from mixer and fold batter once or twice with rubber spatula to incorporate any remaining flour. Scrape into prepared pan.

3. Bake until top is golden brown and wooden skewer or toothpick inserted into center comes out with no crumbs attached, 45 to 50 minutes.

4. **FOR THE GLAZE:** While cake is baking, whisk 2 tablespoons lemon juice, buttermilk, and confectioners' sugar until smooth, adding more lemon juice gradually as needed until glaze is thick but still pourable (mixture should leave faint trail across bottom of mixing bowl when drizzled from whisk). Cool cake in pan on wire rack set over baking sheet for 10 minutes, then invert cake directly onto rack. Pour half of glaze over warm cake and let cool for 1 hour; pour remaining glaze evenly over top of cake and continue to cool to room temperature, at least 2 hours. Cut into slices and serve.

Butterscotch Butter Cake

Source: Cook's Country Oct/Nov 2008

Ingredients

Dough

¼ cup whole milk, heated to 100 degrees
1½ teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast
¼ cup packed light brown sugar
2 large eggs, room temperature
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon salt
1½ cups all-purpose flour
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 6 pieces and softened

Topping

½ cup granulated sugar
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
2 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
1 large egg, room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
⅓ cup all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons instant butterscotch pudding mix
2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar

Instructions

Remove the cake from the oven when the perimeter is golden brown and the center is still slightly loose; the topping will continue to set as the cake cools.

1. For the dough: Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 200 degrees. When oven reaches 200 degrees, shut oven off. Line 8-inch square baking pan with foil sling. Grease foil and medium bowl.
2. In bowl of standing mixer fitted with paddle attachment, mix milk and yeast on low speed until yeast dissolves. Add brown sugar, eggs, vanilla, salt, and flour and mix until combined, about 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium-low and add butter, one piece at a time, until incorporated, then continue mixing for 5 minutes. Transfer batter to prepared bowl, cover with plastic, and place in warm oven. Let rise until doubled in size, about 30 minutes. Spread batter in prepared pan. Heat oven to 350 degrees.
3. For the topping: In bowl of standing mixer fitted with paddle attachment, beat granulated sugar, butter, and cream cheese on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low and add corn syrup, egg, and vanilla until combined. Add flour and pudding mix and mix until just incorporated. Portion dollops of topping evenly over batter, then spread into even layer.
4. Once oven is fully heated, bake until exterior is golden and center of topping is just beginning to color (center should jiggle slightly when pan is shaken), about 25 minutes. Cool in pan at least 3 hours. Use foil overhang to lift cake from pan. Dust cake with confectioners' sugar. Serve. (Cake can be refrigerated for 2 days.)

Baked Pears

Baked Pears

Source: Betty Schledorn

Serves 2

2 medium ripe pears, peeled and halved

4 teaspoons butter or margarine

1 teaspoon lemon juice

2 teaspoons sugar

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

4 teaspoons orange marmalade

Place pear halves, cut side up, in a shallow 1-qt. baking dish. Place butter in the center of each; drizzle with lemon juice. Combine sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over pears. Top with marmalade. Cover and bake at 350 degrees F for 15-20 minutes or until heated through.

Baked Apple Dumplings

Source: <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/18980/apple-dumplings->

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Ingredients

4 apples, peeled, cored, and sliced.

1 tsp cinnamon

1/4 tsp nutmeg

2 tsp brown sugar

1/2 cup white sugar

1/2 cup butter, melted

1 tbsp water

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 (16 ounce) can refrigerated flaky biscuit dough

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Chop sliced apples into bite-sized pieces and toss with cinnamon, nutmeg, and brown sugar.

In small bowl, combine sugar, melted butter, water, and vanilla.

Butter a 7x11 inch baking pan. Separate biscuit dough into 8 pieces. Flatten each piece of dough into a circle. Distribute apples amongst biscuits and seal them, placing dumplings seam-side down in pan. Pour sauce over the tops. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until golden, turning dumplings over 20-30 minutes through.

Serve hot.

Cider-Poached Pears

Source: <http://www.serious-eats.com/recipes/2011/01/healthy-delicious-cider-poached-pears-with-yogurt-and-toasted-almonds-recipe.html>

1 cup apple cider

1/2 freshly squeezed orange juice

1 vanilla bean, split lengthways

1 cinnamon stick

2 star anise

2 Bosc pears, peeled, halved, and cored

1 teaspoon orange zest

1/2 cup 2% Greek yogurt

1 teaspoon orange zest

1 1/2 tablespoons sliced almonds, toasted

In a small pan over medium-high heat, bring cider, orange juice, vanilla bean, cinnamon stick, and star anise to a boil.

Place pears face down in the pan. Lower heat and simmer gently until a knife inserted into the pears meets no resistance, about 10-20 minutes.

Once pears are tender, kill heat and let cool in pan. Remove to serving plates and set aside.

Over medium heat, reduce remaining poaching liquid to a glaze. Pour over pears.

Mix orange zest with yogurt. Dollop equally on pears.

Sprinkle almonds over yogurt. Serve.

Millionaire's Shortbread

Source: Cook's Illustrated #143, pp 14-15

By Andrea Geary

For a caramel filling with the right texture, monitor the temperature with an instant-read thermometer. We prefer Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Premium Baking Bar for this recipe. Grating a portion of the chocolate is important for getting the chocolate to set properly; the small holes on a box grater work well for this task. Stir often while melting the chocolate, and don't overheat it.

Crust

2 1/2 cups (12 1/2 oz) all-purpose flour

1/2 cup (3 1/2 oz) granulated sugar

3/4 tsp salt

16 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

Filling

1 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk

1 cup packed (7 oz) brown sugar

1/2 cup heavy cream

1/2 cup corn syrup

8 tbsp unsalted butter

1/2 tsp salt

Chocolate

8 oz bittersweet chocolate (6 oz chopped fine; 2 oz grated)

(Remember, 8oz bars are usually divided into 8 1oz segments)

1. **FOR THE CRUST:** Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Make foil sling for 13-by-9-inch baking pan by folding 2 long sheet of aluminum foil; first sheet should be 13 in wide and second sheet should be 9 in wide. Lay sheets of foil in pan perpendicular to each other, with extra foil hanging over edges of pan. Push foil into corners and up sides of pan, smoothing foil flush to pan. Combine flour, sugar, and salt in medium bowl. Add melted butter and stir with rubber spatula until flour is evenly moistened. Crumble dough evenly over bottom of prepared pan. Using your fingertips and palm of your hand, press and smooth dough into even thickness. Using fork, pierce dough at 1in intervals. Bake until light golden brown and firm to touch, about 25 to 30 minutes. Transfer pan to wire rack. Using sturdy metal spatula, press on entire surface of warm crust to compress (this will

make finished bars easier to cut). Let crust cool until it is just warm, at least 20 minutes.

2. **FOR THE FILLING:** Stir all ingredients together in large, heavy-bottomed saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until mixture registers between 236 and 239 degrees (temperature will fluctuate), 16 to 20 minutes. Pour over crust and spread to even thickness (mixture will be very hot). Let cool completely, about 1 1/2 hours.
3. **FOR THE CHOCOLATE:** Microwave chopped chocolate in bowl at 50% power, stirring every 15 seconds, until melted but not much warmer than body temperature (check by holding in palm of your hand), 1-2 minutes. Add grated chocolate and stir until smooth, returning to microwave for no more than 5 seconds at a time to finish melting if necessary. Spread chocolate evenly over surface of filling. Refrigerate shortbread until chocolate is just set, about 10 minutes.

Using foil overhang, lift shortbread out of pan and transfer to cutting board; discard foil. Using serrated knife and gentle sawing motion, cut shortbread in half crosswise to create two 6 1/2 by 9-in rectangles. Cut each rectangle in half to make four 2 1/2 by 9-in strips. Cut each strip crosswise into 10 equal pieces. Shortbread can be stored at room temperature between layers of parchment for up to 1 week.)

Key Lime Cheesecake (Baked)

Source: Cheesecake Extraordinaire, Mary Crownover, pp.66-67

Possible Additional/Alternate Source: <https://www.cookingclassy.com/key-lime-cheesecake/>

Crust

3/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 1/2 tbsp sugar
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1/4 cup butter, softened
1/2 tsp vanilla extract

In a medium bowl, stir together flour and sugar. Add egg, butter, and vanilla extract. Beat with an electric mixer until combined. Press dough evenly onto the bottom of a 9-in springform pan.

Bake at 350 for 12 to 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from oven and set aside.

(Notes: I do not trust this crust recipe. Consider using the thicker graham-cracker crust from Cook's Illustrated instead.)

Key Lime Filling

24 oz cream cheese
3/4 cup sugar
5 tbsp sour cream
5 tsp flour
4 eggs
1 egg yolk
1/2 cup frozen limeade concentrate, thawed
1/4 cup lime juice
1 tsp vanilla extract

In a large bowl, combine cream cheese, sugar, sour cream, and flour. Beat in stand mixer until smooth. Add eggs and egg yolk, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in limeade concentrate, lime juice, and vanilla extract. Pour cream cheese mixture over cooled crust.

Bake at 350 for 15 minutes. Lower the temperature to 200 and bake for 70 minutes, or until the center no longer seems wet or shiny. Remove the cake from the oven and run a knife around the inside edge of the pan.

(Notes: "Frozen Limeade Concentrate" seems like a cheap shortcut. Why not just use sugar, lime juice, and steeped lime zest to get a similar result? Should research alternatives. Possibly derive from the no-bake key lime cheesecake recipe.)

Honey Lime Glaze

1/2 cup frozen limeade concentrate, thawed

4 tsp lime juice

1 tbsp cornstarch

1 tbsp honey

1 tsp lime zest

In a small saucepan, stir together limeade concentrate, lime juice, cornstarch, honey, and lime zest. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Pour over cheesecake.

Key Lime Cheesecake (Icebox)

Source: Cooks Country, April/May 2005

We wanted our Key Lime Icebox Cheesecake recipe to have a supple, creamy texture—and great flavor too. We tried all manner of recipes, including those that relied on the stiffening power of Cool Whip, and found it was best to stick to the tried-and-true combination of heavy cream and cream cheese thickened with gelatin. Allowing the gelatin to hydrate in a portion of the cream, then bringing it to a boil in the microwave fully activated its thickening power. We whipped the heavy cream and cream cheese smooth before adding the cream and gelatin mixture to ensure the most thorough dispersal of the gelatin. Lime juice and lime zest added just enough spark to perk up the flavor of the tangy cream cheese, while a moderate amount of sugar kept the filling light. Our crumb crust utilized an unusual ingredient—we combined crushed animal crackers with a little butter to bind them, then used a measuring cup or flat-bottomed glass to pack the crumbs into the springform pan.

Ingredients

Crust

1 cup animal cracker crumbs
3 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon grated lime zest
4 tablespoons unsalted butter,
melted and kept warm

(Notes: Why not a graham cracker crust, exactly?)

Filling

1 ½ cups heavy cream
1 envelope unflavored gelatin
⅔ cup sugar
1 pound cream cheese, cut into 1-inch chunks and softened 30 to 45 minutes at room temperature
3 tablespoons lime juice plus 2 tablespoons grated zest from 1 lime
pinch table salt

Garnish

1 lime, halved pole-to-pole and sliced into 12 paper-thin wedges
sugar for dredging

Instructions

Don't rush the softening of the cream cheese. If microwaved, the cream cheese will cook slightly and eventually cause the entire cheesecake mixture to break. To speed up the process, cut the cream cheese into chunks and let it stand at room temperature for at least half an hour. When the cream cheese is no longer cold and gives easily under pressure, it's ready to use. Regular limes are just fine in this recipe.

For the crust: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Stir animal cracker crumbs, sugar, and zest together in medium bowl, then add butter and stir well with fork until mixture resembles wet sand. Transfer crumbs to 9-inch springform pan and, following photo at top of page 25, use bottom of measuring cup to firmly press crumbs into even layer over bottom of pan. Bake crust until fragrant and beginning to brown, about 13 minutes. Cool completely on wire rack, at least 30 minutes.

For the filling: Pour 1/4 cup heavy cream into microwave-safe measuring cup. Add gelatin and whisk to combine. Let stand until gelatin is softened, about 5 minutes, then microwave on high power for about 30 seconds, or until cream is bubbling and gelatin is completely dissolved. Set aside.

Using electric mixer, beat remaining 1 1/4 cups heavy cream and sugar in large bowl at medium-high speed until soft peaks form, about 2 minutes. Add cream cheese and beat at medium-low speed until combined, about 1 minute (a few coffee bean-sized lumps may remain). Scrape bottom and sides of bowl well with rubber spatula. Add lime juice and salt and continue to beat at medium-low speed until combined, about 1 minute. Scrape bottom and sides of bowl again. Increase speed to medium-high and beat until mixture is smooth, about 3 minutes. Add dissolved gelatin mixture and lime zest and continue to beat at medium-high until smooth and airy, about 2 minutes.

Pour filling into cooled crust and, using offset or icing spatula dipped in hot water, spread filling out evenly. Refrigerate for at least 6 hours, but for best results refrigerate overnight.

To serve, wrap hot, damp kitchen towel around springform pan, as shown in photo 1, below right. Unlock pan and carefully lift off sides. Slip thin metal spatula under crust and carefully slide cheesecake onto serving platter.

For the garnish: Coat both sides of lime slices in sugar and space evenly on top of cake, gently twisting the ends in opposite directions and pressing into the filling.