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Caramelized apples key to this fun fall dessert

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Apple Upside Down Cake Photos Susie Iventosch

Here's a fun little autumn twist on the classic pineapple upside down cake using seasonal apples in place of the pineapple slices. The caramelized apples pair beautifully with this delicious vanilla cake for a fun fall dessert. You can use green or red apples but be sure to use apples that hold up well in baking. I've made this cake with both Granny Smith and Honeycrisp apples and really enjoyed both. If you want a little more color to the top of your cake, use red apples and leave the skins on. You can also make this cake in a round pan instead of square and that will give you different options on the apple pattern you choose for the eventual top of the cake. I arranged the apples in a quilted pattern for this square cake. You can arrange the apples any way you like, but if you use a square pan, this pattern seems to work very well. If you choose a similarly sized round pan you can arrange them in a circular fashion like a swirl or a flower.

One key thing to know about upside down cake, is that when it is done baking, you should remove it from the oven and let the cake cool for 10 minutes (not more and not less) before inverting it. This seems to be just the right amount of time to allow the cake to flip perfectly. Then, leave the pan over the inverted cake for a few minutes to allow all of the topping to work its way out of the pan. This way you won't miss any of the delicious gooey topping.

We have also made this cake with plums and peaches in the summer and that is a great summertime version, too!

INGREDIENTS

Apples

3 medium apples Granny Smith, Braeburn or Honeycrisp

2 oz. butter, melted (1/4 cup or 1/2 stick or 4 tbsp.)

1 cup (packed) light brown sugar

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1/2 tsp. cardamom (use 1/4 tsp. nutmeg or allspice if you don't have cardamom)

Cake Batter

1/3 cup butter, at room temperature

1/3 cup light brown sugar

1/3 cup granulated sugar

2 large eggs, separated

1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

1 1/2 cups cake flour can use all-purpose, but cake flour makes the cake a bit fluffier

1 tbsp. baking powder

1/4 tsp. salt

1/3 cup apple juice

1/3 cup milk

DIRECTIONS

Apples:

Grease or spray an 8x8 inch baking pan. Preheat oven to 350 F.

Core apples and slice into thin (1/4 to 1/2-inch) wedges. You can peel the apples too, if you prefer, but we like the color from the red apples, so we leave the peels on. Gently toss the apples with the cinnamon and cardamom.

Mix 1 cup brown sugar with melted butter and spread evenly on the bottom of the prepared baking pan.

Arrange apple slices in whatever pattern you like on top of the brown sugar. Set aside while you make the cake.

Cake Batter:

Separate eggs into whites and yolks. Keep the yolks handy for adding to the cake batter. Place whites in a mixing bowl and, using clean, dry beaters, beat until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

Mix flour, baking powder and salt together in a small bowl. Set aside. Mix milk, apple juice and vanilla together and set aside.

Cream butter and sugars together in a large mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks and beat well. Add flour and liquids alternately beating well after each. Begin and end with dries. Gently fold beaten egg whites into the batter just until incorporated.

Spread batter over the apples in the prepared baking pan. Bake for 30 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.

Remove from oven and allow to cool for 10 minutes. Then, place a cake platter or a serving plate upside down on top of the cake. Holding tightly to both the cake pan and the serving dish, invert the cake. Leave the baking pan on top of the inverted cake just until most of the good stuff drips down over the cake,

about 3-5 minutes. Remove the cake pan.

Serve apple upside cake with a dollop of whipped cream or your favorite vanilla, cinnamon, caramel or praline ice cream or frozen dessert. We also love yogurt-whipped cream with this cake. Simply whip 1 cup of whipping cream and fold in 3/4 cup nonfat Greek (thick) yogurt. Flavor with a teaspoon of vanilla and one tablespoon of powdered sugar.

Note - don't wait too long to invert your cake after it comes out of the oven. We find that 10 minutes is plenty of time for the cake to cool enough to flip it. If you wait too long to invert the cake, the caramelized apple topping can get crystallized and stick to the bottom of the cake pan. This can mess with your apple pattern and makes it harder to make a beautiful cake presentation!





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