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...While Visions of Ginger and Caramel Danced in Their Heads

By Susie Iventosch

It is Chow's delicious ginger cake, served with pumpkin ice cream and warm caramel sauce, that has recently been on readers' minds. Maybe it's the time of year, when sugar and spice add the perfect accent of warmth and holiday cheer!

"If we could get the recipe for the ginger cake with pumpkin ice cream at Chow, all would be right with the world," said Missy Schaez of Lafayette. "If you haven't had it, it is to die for!"

Schaez has lived in Lafayette since 2000, but, originally from the Midwest, she misses the fall season.

"The flavors of this ginger cake bring me right back there,"

she said. "I order it every time I dine at Chow and my family knows to watch me take the first bite as I'm truly in heaven!"

Alas, I fear the sleuth in me may be all washed up. Try as I might, I could not get this recipe from Chow. So, I turned to my kitchen in an attempt to forge a similar cake. This version calls for freshly minced ginger root in addition to a plethora of spices, and since I am not a gigantic molasses fan, mine has a bit less of that in the recipe. But, when served with homemade caramel sauce, Missy is right, ginger cake and caramel sauce are an amazing combination! I hope you enjoy it too.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Ginger cake with caramel sauce Photo: Susie Iventosch

Fresh Ginger-Spice Cake

Ingredients

- ½ cup (1 cube) softened to room temp
- 1 cup (packed) brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon molasses
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon of freshly minced ginger (takes about 3-4 inches of ginger root, peeled and minced)
- ¼ teaspoon powdered cloves
- ¼ teaspoon allspice
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon powdered ginger
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup milk

Directions

In a large mixing, bowl cream butter and brown sugar with an electric mixer. Add molasses and cocoa powder and mix well. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Stir in vanilla and minced ginger. In a separate bowl, mix all dries. Add dries (to butter mixture) alternately with milk, beginning and ending with dry ingredients. Pour batter into a greased 8-inch square baking pan and bake at 350 for approximately 30 minutes, or until center is done and toothpick comes out clean. Serve with ice cream and spoon warm caramel sauce over both. Look for heaven!

Caramel Sauce

(Yields about 1 cup)

Ingredients

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cube of butter, cut into pieces
- ½ cup heavy cream

*You will need a larger saucepan than you might think to make this sauce. When adding the butter and the cream to the sauce, the mixture bubbles up and increases a considerable amount in volume before settling back down. Be sure to have all ingredients ready, because there will be no time to dilly-dally once the sugar is melted! Also using mitts might be a good idea, because the sauce tends to splatter a bit when you add the butter and cream, and it's very, very hot!

Directions

In a heavy 2 to 3-quart saucepan, heat sugar on medium-high heat. Stir vigorously with a wooden spoon or a whisk as the sugar begins to melt. You will notice some liquid and some sugar crystals, but continue to stir until all sugar is melted. The melted sugar will take on an amber (but not burned) color. Immediately add the butter to the pan and whisk until all butter is melted. Take the mixture off the heat and right away add the cream in a slow stream, whisking all the while and until caramel sauce is smooth in texture. Cool to room temp and store in a covered container for up to two weeks.

*Note – a thick pan will help prevent the sugar from burning when melting.



This recipe is available on our web site. Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com

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