



Apple Cake with Burnt Caramel Sauce

This cake is my great-grandmother's recipe. But one warning: If you make this, it's possible that you may never be allowed to NOT have it around the house.

Ask me how I know.

Ingredients (for cake):

3 c. flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. allspice
1 c. oil
1 3/4 c. sugar
2 tsp. vanilla

2 c. pecans, chopped
3 c. apples, peeled and chopped (works best with a firm-fleshed apple, like Honeycrisp or Gala)
3 eggs

* You will also need a 10" coffee cake ring pan.

Instructions (for cake):

Preheat the oven to 350° and grease a 10" coffee-cake ring WELL. Sift the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and allspice together in a bowl. Set aside. Beat the oil, eggs, sugar, and vanilla together for two minutes, then add in the flour mixture a little at a time. Warning: this batter will get VERY stiff, so you might want to switch to mixing by hand if you're using a smaller hand mixer, so as to avoid burning out the motor. Fold in the nuts and apples once all the flour mix has been incorporated, and spread batter into the greased pan. It will bake for about 1 hour, 15 minutes, but check on it often. A toothpick inserted in the middle of the cake should come out with just a few crumbs sticking to it. Cool in the pan for ten minutes, then invert onto your service platter. With a large knife, make some deep slits in the top of the cake for the sauce to seep into.

Ingredients (for sauce):

1 c. sugar
1/4 c. water

6 Tbsp. butter
1/2 c. milk or heavy cream

Instructions (for sauce):

You will need a saucepan with tall sides and a thick bottom (Revere-ware is your friend, here). Heat the sugar over a medium-high flame and stir with a whisk until it's mostly dissolved. It will be VERY HOT at this point, so use extreme caution. Prepare your butter, and add the water to the sugar. It will not be happy, but keep on stirring. Your sugar might develop a hard crust on top. Break it up and keep stirring. Once it's nice and syrupy and a dark amber color, toss in the butter. Stir lightly to melt the butter and incorporate it with the syrup. Once the butter's all melted, remove the pan from the heat, take a deep breath, let it out, and add the milk. The mixture will foam up a bit, but that's what the big tall pan is for. Whisk away until the milk is fully incorporated, and voila! Caramel sauce. Pour it into a measuring cup or other heatproof container that is easy to pour from. When it's cooled for about five minutes, pour it carefully over the apple cake, making sure you saturate the holes you made earlier. It's best to eat the cake a couple hours after you cover it in sauce, to allow the stuff a chance to get absorbed.