

10/09/11 - Apple Cake with Caramel

Yom Kippur was winding down yesterday, the last of the sun's rays fading from the stained glass windows in the temple; my feet tired from standing during the Neilah service, my thoughts turned to the menu for the break-the-fast party my sister-in-law makes every year. It's a dairy party, bagels, lox, cream cheese and an array of salads brought by friends and neighbors. I contributed vegetable lasagna and this Apple Cake with Caramel. I made my usual apple cake recipe a few days ago, changing the recipe to simplify it. Thursday night I had an idea to jazz up the simple powdered sugar dusted apple cake and turn this plain, homey little cake into a showstopper.

Caramelized apples in butter and brown sugar along with home-made caramel would do the trick. The cake was a success, the best, there were not even crumbs remaining on the platter; it was good enough that uninhibited guests used their fingers to wipe any bit of caramel with a crumb clinging to it off the platter. This is a dairy cake and caloric, but every once in a while it is good to indulge with just a little



Serves 12 to 16

For Cake:

Apple Filling

3 Granny Smith apples,

5 tablespoons granulated sugar

2 teaspoons cinnamon

Cake Batter:

2 and 1/2 cups granulated sugar

5 large eggs

1 cup vegetable oil (I prefer safflower oil)

1/4 cup fresh squeezed orange juice

1 teaspoon vanilla

3 cups flour

2 tablespoons orange zest

3 1/2 teaspoons baking powder (be sure to check the expiration date)

1/2 teaspoon salt

Pre-heat oven to 350° F. Peel apples (you could also use Pink Lady or Honey Crisp), cut them half, and core them. I find it easiest to core them with a melon ball tool. Dice apple halves into 1/3 inch cubes. Place apples in a medium bowl with sugar and cinnamon. Stir and set aside.

Combine sugar measured for cake, eggs, vegetable oil, orange juice, and vanilla in a large bowl. Whisk to blend. Combine orange zest and dry ingredients in a separate medium bowl. Stir dry ingredients into wet. Mix until just combined and smooth, do not over-mix. Gently fold in diced apples, using a rubber spatula.

Spray a 12 cup Bundt pan with a non-stick spray. Pour apple cake batter into Bundt pan to about 2/3 to 3/4 of the way up the sides. The batter should be well below the top of the pan if it is a true 12 cup Bundt pan. If there is too much batter, spray one or two mini loaf pan molds and pour extra batter in them.

Many fancy shaped Bundt pans are not really 12 cups and you will have left over batter. Bake about 55 minutes to 1 hour and 5 minutes or until tester comes out with barely moist crumbs on it. I prefer to use a long tooth pick or skewer for a tester. Remove cake from oven when ready and set on a cooling rack.

Cool cake in pan for 15 minutes. Turn the cake out onto rack, so air circulates underneath and it continues to cool. Cake can be stored after it is completely cool. Wrap in plastic wrap for freezing, or store in a cake keeper for the next day.

For caramel:

2 sticks or one cup unsalted butter

3/4 cup whipping cream

1 and 1/3 cup granulated sugar

2 tablespoons corn syrup

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla

To make caramel place room temperature butter in a small heavy saucepan and add cream. Place pan over medium heat and bring to a simmer, not boil. Turn off the heat and set aside.



In another small heavy bottom saucepan, heat sugar and corn syrup on medium heat. The sugar will slowly dissolve and blend with corn syrup. Do not stir; do not scrape down sides of the pan. You can swirl the pan a bit now and then. Do not walk away; all of a sudden, you will notice the edges of the melted sugar starting to





Bit by bit syrup will turn golden caramel color and all of sugar will be melted. When



At this exact moment, add butter and cream blend, stir in salt and vanilla using a wood spoon. The mixture will foam up almost to the top of the pan, keep calm, stir and it will settle down into rich opaque caramel. Turn heat to medium- low and cook caramel for about 1 minute, it will thicken a little.



Set caramel aside to cool. For this cake I used half of this caramel. The rest I stored in a glass bowl with a lid in my refrigerator. Caramel keeps for several weeks and is delicious on other cakes, ice cream....For Caramelized Apples:

3 large Honey Crisp apples

1/2 orange

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/3 cup packed light brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Peel and core three Honey Crisp or Granny Smith Apples, (Pink Ladies work well also but I don't believe this is their season). Slice apples in 1/8 inch slices, place in a medium bowl and squeeze orange over top of apples. Toss to mix with juice.

Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium heat, add in butter.



As butter melts place apples in skillet with as many touching the surface of pan as possible. Sprinkle cinnamon on apples and dump on brown sugar. Let apples sit for a moment and when bubbling and very hot, gently turn and toss apple slices to distribute brown sugar. Again make sure as many apple slices as possible are flat against the surface of pan in order to caramelize. Leave apples to cook for a few moments and then, toss and redistribute again. Apples should become soft while butter and brown sugar start to add color to apples.



When apple mix is caramelized and gooey, turn off heat. Let apples cool for 10 minutes. Place apple cake on the plate you are going to use. Fill center of the Bundt cake with apples and distribute the rest around cake plate. Ladle approximately one half of the cooked and cooled caramel over top of cake, allowing it to run down the sides and pool here and there on the cake plate. Serve. You may want to serve this with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream, but I think it is rich enough as it stands.



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