

SPICY PINK LADIES ON A TRAPEZE (AKA SPICED APPLE UP-SIDE-DOWN CAKE)

INGREDIENTS

Topping

6 tablespoons butter

3/4 cup dark brown sugar

Pinch of salt

4 Pink Lady apples (about 1 3/4 pounds), peeled, cored and cut into 1/4-inch wedges

Batter

1/2 cup (1 stick or 4 ounces) butter, at room temperature

1/2 cup sugar

1 large egg

1/2 cup dark molasses

1/2 cup honey

1 1/4 cups buttermilk

3 cups flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon cardamom

1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 325F.

Make the topping: Grease two 8-inch round cake pans.* Melt butter in a small saucepan. Add brown sugar and simmer over moderate heat, stirring, four minutes, then swirl in salt. Remove from heat and pour into the bottom of your pans. Make rows of overlapping apple slices on top of the caramel. Chop any remaining slices and place them in the gaps.

Make the batter: Using a mixer, blend 1/2 cup butter and the sugar on medium-low speed. Increase the speed to high and cream until light and fluffy.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg, molasses, honey and buttermilk. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg. Alternate mixing the flour and molasses mixtures into the butter mixture, adding the next once the last has been incorporated.

Pour the batter into the pans. Bake at least 50-60 minutes or until a wooden tester inserted into the center of the loaf comes out clean. Let cool on a rack for 10 to 15 minutes, then turn out onto a platter. Note that the caramel apple mixture will be liquidy and when you turn out of the pan, it will run over the cake like a glaze. Tastes great warm or at room temperature.

* Recipe makes 2 8-inch cakes or 1 12-inch cake.