

Oven-Roasted Plum Cakes

Servings: 12

Source: Baking with Julia, p. 255 (Marcel Desaulniers)

Ingredients

- 1 ounce Butter, Room Temperature
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cups Light Brown Sugar, Packed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Granulated Sugar
- 2 large Eggs
- 1 teaspoon Orange Zest, Minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Vanilla Extract
- 1 cup All Purpose Flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoons Baking Soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Buttermilk
- 4 large Ripe Plums, Halved And Pitted
- Melted Butter

Method

Position rack in the center of oven and preheat to 350°F. Coat the insides of twelve 8-9 ounce custard or souffle cups with melted butter and set them on a jelly-roll pan; reserve.

Working in a mixed fitted with the paddle attachment or with a hand held mixer, cream butter, 2 tbsp of brown sugar and the granulated sugar together on medium speed for 3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and continue to beat for 3 minutes more, or until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture whitens. Add one of the eggs, increase the speed to high, and beat for about half a minute; scrape down the bowl and paddle, add the second egg and beat again for 30 seconds more. Reduce the mixer speed to low, add the flour and baking soda and beat for just 15 seconds. Pour in the buttermilk and mix for just 30 seconds more. Finish blending the ingredients with a rubber spatula (a precaution to avoid overmixing the batter).

Spoon about 2 tbsp of batter into each of the prepared cups. Place a half plum, cut side up, into each cup, pushing the plum down only a little. (Try to leave some of the plum above batter level so that when the cake rises, the plum will still show). Sprinkle an equal amount of the remaining brown sugar over the cut surface of each of the plums. Place the baking pan with the filled souffle cups on the center rack of the oven and bake for about 25 minutes, or until golden brown and toothpick inserted in the cake part of the dessert comes out clean. Remove the pan from the oven and cool the cakes in their cups for 8 to 10 minutes before unmolding.

To unmold the cakes, run a short icing spatula or blunt knife around the edge of the cakes; if necessary, work it under the cakes to release the bottoms. Lift the cakes out with the spatula and, keeping them right side up, place them in the center of individual dessert plates. Serve the cakes warm (although they are great at room temp) accompanying them with ice cream, whipped cream or chocolate sauce if desired.

Bittersweet Chocolate Sauce

About 3 cups.

4 oz semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped 4 oz unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped 2 c heavy cream $\frac{1}{2}$ c sugar $\frac{1}{4}$ c unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted 2 tbsp dark creme de cacao 1 tsp pure vanilla extract

Place the semisweet and unsweetened chocolate in a medium bowl. Heat the cream and sugar in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. When the sugar is dissolved, bring the mixture to the boil. Remove the saucepan from the heat and whisk in the cocoa, whisking energetically until smooth; stir in the creme de cacao and vanilla. Pour the hot mixture over the chopped chocolate and let it sit for 5 minutes, then whisk to smooth the sauce. Serve the sauce warm or at room temperature.

Sauce can be kept in tightly covered jar in refrigerator for a week and warmed in a double boiler or microwave oven before serving.