

Bittersweet Chocolate and Pear Cake

Author: Courtesy of Al Di La Restaurant in Park Slope, Brooklyn

Source: Smitten Kitchen blog

Internet Address:

<http://smittenkitchen.com/2009/01/bittersweet-chocolate-and-pear-cake/>



1 cup all-purpose flour
 1 tablespoon baking powder
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 3 large eggs, at room-temperature
 4 ounces unsalted butter
 3/4 cup sugar
 3 whole pears, peeled, in a small dice (just under-ripe and firm, not juicy)
 3/4 cup bittersweet chocolate, chopped in chunks
WHIPPED CREAM:
 1 cup heavy cream
 2 teaspoons powdered sugar
 1/2 teaspoon almond extract

Serving Ideas: You can also serve this with vanilla ice cream, or creme fraiche.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 374 Calories; 25g Fat (57.9% calories from fat); 5g Protein; 37g Carbohydrate; 3g Dietary Fiber; 121mg Cholesterol; 233mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1 Grain(Starch); 1/2 Lean Meat; 1/2 Fruit; 0 Non-Fat Milk; 5 Fat; 1 Other Carbohydrates.

Carolyn T's Tasting Spoons blog:
<http://tastingspoons.com>

Description: Al Di La is a restaurant in Brooklyn.

Notes: DO use pears that are barely under-ripe, and still firm. A soggy batter is your enemy here. If you use juicy pears, you'll have a soggy pear mass in the bottom that won't bake through. If you have large (like Bosc), use just two pears, not three.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-inch springform pan and dust with breadcrumbs or flour (tap out any excess), and set aside.
2. Sift the flour, baking powder and salt together, set aside. Chop the chocolate and set aside. While the eggs are whipping (step 3), peel, core and chop the pears. Left open to the air they will turn brown - you can drop them into a bowl of Squirt (carbonated beverage), which will keep them fresh. When ready to use, drain and roll pears out onto a paper towel to soak up any excess moisture.
3. Using a mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the eggs on high speed until pale and very thick. (In a professional Kitchen Aid, it takes at least five minutes; on a home machine, it will take nine minutes to get sufficient volume.)
4. While the eggs are whipping, brown the butter. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan (because it will foam a lot) and cook it until the butter browns and smells nutty (about 6 to 8 minutes). It helps to frequently scrape the solids off the bottom of the pan in the last couple minutes to ensure even browning. Remove from the flame but keep in a warm spot.
5. Add the sugar to the eggs and whip a few minutes more.
6. Just as the egg-sugar mixture is starting to loose volume, turn the mixture down to stir, and add the flour mixture and brown butter - add one third of the flour mixture, then half of the butter, a third of the flour, the remaining butter, and the rest of flour. Whisk until just barely combined - no more than a minute from when the flour is first added - and then use a spatula to gently fold the batter until the ingredients are combined. It is very important not to over-whisk or fold the batter or it will lose volume.
7. Pour into prepared pan. Sprinkle the pear and chocolate chunks over the top, and bake until the cake is golden brown and springs back to the touch, about 30-50 minutes, or a tester comes out clean.
8. Serve it with barely whipped whipped cream with a drop of almond extract in it, At the restaurant they serve it with buttermilk ice cream.