



November 4, 2007

FOOD: RECIPE REDUX

1973: Teddie's Apple Cake

By [AMANDA HESSER](#)

For reasons that elude me, cakes have come to represent long hours in the kitchen, when anyone who actually makes cakes knows that cookies are the time suck. Cookies require measuring and multiple batches. Cakes get mixed up and go into the oven all at once. The most lovable ones even cool in their pans and require no icing. Which is why if you look back in The Times archives at recipes from 30 or more years ago, when most people cooked every day, there were many more cake recipes. Cake was something you whipped up every couple of days, after the previous one vanished to crumbs.

Teddie's apple cake, which appeared in The Times in 1973, is a typical standby of the period. None of the ingredients are difficult to find — most are probably already in your pantry — and the cake is designed to stay fresh for no more than a few days.

Based on oil rather than butter, it creates a light, airy crumb that's delicious while it lasts, with walnuts, raisins and slivers of apple threading the cinnamon-scented dough. There is no icing, and no need for one.

Boris Portnoy, the pastry chef at Campton Place in San Francisco, says that the cake's texture reminds him of Black Magic Cake, a moist oil-based chocolate cake, the recipe for which could be found on the back of a Hershey's Cocoa tin.

But like most chefs who try out the old recipes for this column, Portnoy was frustrated by its simplicity. "It's just good and normal, but kind of one-dimensional," he says. We agreed to disagree, and then he had his chance to make something multidimensional — and vastly better.

Portnoy came up with a number of modern desserts inspired by the flavors and ideas in Teddie's apple cake — one involved walnuts, olives, an almond mousse and roasted quince; another black walnuts, dulce de leche and olive oil. But in the end, he settled on something much simpler that added complexity while still referencing the original recipe. He made what he calls a "soufflé crepe."

First, you caramelize apples in butter, thyme and a trace of sugar, browning them on the edges and cooking them until tender. Next, you blend together a thick batter seasoned with vanilla bean, cinnamon and allspice and lighten it with whipped egg whites. You reheat the apples with more butter in a skillet, pour in the batter and slip the skillet into the oven, where the crepe rises magnificently.

Impressive as Portnoy's creation looks, you don't fully appreciate his ingenuity until you taste the crepe, which separates into three distinct layers. The browned cap is crisp like a waffle; the middle is dense with apples; the bottom is reminiscent of custard.

The crepe doesn't last much longer than the time it takes to carry it to the table, but like the apple cake, it's a one-pan wonder and can be made on the fly.

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1973: Teddie's Apple Cake

This recipe appeared in The Times in an article by Jean Hewitt.

Butter for greasing pan

3 cups flour, plus more for dusting pan

1 1/2 cups vegetable oil

2 cups sugar

3 eggs

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon vanilla

3 cups peeled, cored and thickly sliced tart apples, like Honeycrisp or Granny Smith

1 cup chopped walnuts

1 cup raisins

Vanilla ice cream (optional).

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour a 9-inch tube pan. Beat the oil and sugar together in a mixer (fitted with a paddle attachment) while assembling the remaining ingredients. After about 5 minutes, add the eggs and beat until the mixture is creamy.
2. Sift together 3 cups of flour, the salt, cinnamon and baking soda. Stir into the batter. Add the vanilla, apples, walnuts and raisins and stir until combined.
3. Transfer the mixture to the prepared pan. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in the pan before turning out. Serve at room temperature with vanilla ice cream, if desired. *Serves 8.*

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2007: Spiced Soufflé Crepe With Sautéed Apples

By Boris Portnoy, the pastry chef at Campton Place in San Francisco.

Tart apples are particularly abundant this time of year. Portnoy used Granny Smith apples, but you can try this recipe with Empire, Macoun, Honeycrisp, Winesap or Pippin.

5 tablespoons unsalted butter

6 sprigs thyme

4 tart apples, peeled, cored and quartered

3/4 cup, plus 2 tablespoons, sugar

1 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise, seeds scraped out, pod and seeds reserved

5 tablespoons melted butter

7 eggs, separated

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon allspice

1/2 cup, plus 1 tablespoon, cake flour

Salt

2 cups whole milk, at room temperature.

Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

Vanilla ice cream or crème

fraîche (optional).

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a 12-inch iron skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter with the thyme sprigs over medium-high heat. Add the apples and brown on all sides until just tender when pierced with a fork, 10 to 15 minutes. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of the sugar and cook, gently stirring, until the sugar dissolves and the apples caramelize, about 1 to 2 minutes more. Remove the thyme and set the apples aside. Wipe the skillet clean.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the vanilla pod and seeds with the melted butter, egg yolks, 1/2 cup of the sugar, cinnamon, allspice, cake flour and a pinch of salt. Whisk in the milk until combined.
3. Whisk the egg whites with a pinch of salt, gradually adding the remaining 1/4 cup sugar. Whip to soft peaks, and then fold into the batter.
4. Melt the remaining 3 tablespoons butter in the clean skillet over medium-high heat, swirling the butter up the sides of the pan. When the butter is foamy, spread the sautéed apples in the pan, then pour in the

batter. Transfer to the oven and bake uncovered until the center of crepe no longer wobbles when shaken, 20 to 25 minutes. Sift confectioners' sugar on top, and if you like, serve with vanilla ice cream or crème fraîche. *Serves 8 to 10.*

This recipe appeared in The Times in an article by Jean Hewitt; Food stylist: Susan Spungen

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