

Wonderful Apple Cake

Image above courtesy of Mary Berry's New AGA Cookbook

This is an exceptionally good seasonal Mary Berry recipe, which I have cooked every autumn and winter for nearly 30 years. The result is greater than the sum of its parts. This cake can be made earlier in the year with plums or rhubarb with delicious results. Mary Berry suggests serving with a dusting of icing sugar, warm or cold and vanilla ice-cream or crème fraîche. My preference is to serve it with real custard (crème anglaise)

Here are instructions for electric, gas and AGA (below) cooking.

You will need

- An 8" or 29cm loose-bottomed cake tin, lightly greased.
- 8 oz (225 g) self-raising flour
- 1 level teaspoon baking powder
- 6 - 8 oz (170 - 225 g) caster sugar (your preference)
- 2 large eggs
- Half teaspoon almond essence
- 5 oz (150 g) butter, melted
- 9-10 oz (250 g) cooking apples, windfalls, or super-ripe apples, peeled, cored and sliced, not too thickly
- 1oz (25 g) flaked almonds



Method

Preheat oven to 160C fan or 140C / gas 3

Into a large mixing bowl measure the first 6 ingredients: SR flour, baking powder, sugar, eggs, almond essence and butter.

Mix well until blended then beat for about a minute.
Spread half this mixture into the cake tin.

Slice the apples and lay them on top of the mixture in the tin, piling slightly higher in the centre.
The tricky bit: using 2 dessert spoons spoon the remaining mixture roughly over the apples. It will look like there may not be enough mixture and it is quite sticky and awkward, but fear not. Make sure that the mixture covers the centre of the apples more than the edges. As it warms in the oven the mixture will spread out and cover the apples. Sprinkle with the flaked almonds.

Bake in the pre-heated oven for between 1¼ and 1½ hrs until golden and a test skewer comes out clean from the centre of the cake.

AGA method

2-oven AGA

Place the grid shelf on the floor of the roasting (top) oven.

Place the cold plain shelf on the second set of runners.

Here I usually place the cake tin on a thin baking tray to help move the cake safely between ovens during cooking.

Bake the cake for approx 20 mins on the grid shelf, until a pale golden colour. Watch carefully.

Transfer the plain shelf, while still hot (care!) to the middle of the simmering oven.

Very gently and carefully lift the cake onto the hot plain shelf in the simmering oven and bake for a further 30 - 40 mins until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

AGA with a Baking oven

Hang the grid shelf on the lowest set of runners and bake the cake for about 1¼ hrs or until a skewer comes out clean after being inserted into the middle of the cake.

If the cake is getting too brown protect it with the cold shelf hung on the second set of runners above the cake.