

PINEAPPLE UPSIDE DOWN CAKE

The recipe below is for a single pan in a 9" x 9" x 3" square pan or a 9" x 3" round pan. If you wish to make a larger cake, use a 9" x 13" x 2" pan or a and double all the ingredients below. If you can find an old 9 1/2" x 13 1/2" x 2", it works just perfectly.

This cake takes quite a while to prepare - about 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Be sure to read the **TIPS** section at the end before attempting this recipe.

TOPPING INGREDIENTS:

- 4 Tbsp. REAL butter, NOT margarine, plus 1/2 Tbsp for greasing cake pan
- 2/3 cup light brown sugar, packed
- Sliced pineapple rings in their own juice, drained WELL before use. For a single recipe, use one 8 oz can. For a double recipe, use two 15 1/4 oz. You will have some left over slices. A 20 ounce can, if you can find it, works perfectly.

Maraschino cherries

CAKE INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ tsp. baking POWDER
- 3 Tbsp. cornmeal, fine ground, aka corn meal flour (see **TIPS** below)
- ½ tsp. salt
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted REAL butter, NOT margarine, room temp.
- 1 cup granulated sugar + 2 Tbsp for use with egg whites
- 4 eggs, all separated, yolks from whites
- 1½ tsp. vanilla
- 2/3 cup whole milk
- Optional: One 8 oz. can crushed pineapple in its own juice and drained WELL. For a double recipe, use one 15 1/4 oz.

DIRECTIONS:

For the topping:

1. Butter bottom and sides of 9" X 9" X 3" square pan or a 9" X 3" round pan. For a double recipe, use a 9" X 13" X 2" pan.
2. Melt 4 Tbsp. butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat; add brown sugar and cook, stirring constantly until mixture is foamy and pale - about 4 minutes or a little less. Don't overcook the topping or it will be too hard and candy-like. Immediately pour mixture evenly into buttered pan. For a large pan, do this: Starting in a corner, right up to the sides, place a full pineapple ring and then additional rings right next to it down the long side of the pan, then repeat on the other long side. This will leave a space in the middle, but not large enough for full rings, so cut the rings in half and place the half-rings down the middle, alternating directions. Place the cherries in each pineapple ring hole and wherever there is space for a cherry. NOTE: There is no need to press them down through the brown sugar. If you don't

get the placing just right, it's okay to move the fruit until it appears properly positioned.

NOTE: See # 7. "Topping Alternative" below in **TIPS** section.

For the cake:

1. Adjust rack to lower middle position and heat to 350 degrees.
2. Whisk flour, baking powder, corn meal and salt together into a medium bowl and set aside.
3. Cream butter in a large bowl with mixer on medium speed.
4. Gradually add sugar and continue beating for about 2 minutes until light and fluffy.
5. Beat in yolks and vanilla, scraping sides of bowl with spatula when necessary.
6. Reduce speed to low and add dry mixture and milk, alternately, starting with the dry mixture first, and continuing in 3 or 4 batches. Mix until smooth.
7. Optional: Add appropriately sized can of drained, crushed pineapple to the batter and **STIR** in, not mix, well.
8. Before beating egg whites, make sure there are no traces of yolk in the whites or water in the mixing bowl - clean off the mixer's whisks also.
9. Beat egg whites in a large bowl until frothy. Increase speed to medium-high; beat to soft peaks. Gradually add 2 Tbsp. sugar and continue to beat to stiff peaks.
10. With a large rubber spatula spoon, **GENTLY** fold $\frac{1}{4}$ of the beaten whites into the batter to lighten. Fold in remaining whites, $\frac{1}{4}$ at a time, and incorporate each batch until no white streaks remain. Take as much time as needed for this step - you want to retain in the batter as much air from the whites as possible.
11. Gently pour batter into pan and spread evenly on top of fruit, being careful not to dislodge the fruit. If you are using a 9" x 13' x 2" pan, the batter will about come about to the top of the pan.
12. Bake until top is brown and or a wooden skewer comes out clean, about 45 - 65 minutes. For a larger cake, about 60-65 minutes is usually required. Note that the cake will probably rise **ABOVE** the top edge of the pan, but don't panic, batter will not overflow on to the bottom of the oven - but remember, the brown sugar might! See # 2 in **TIPS** below.
13. Rest cake on rack for about 10 minutes. Don't allow it to cool too long as this can make the top of the cake stick to the bottom of the pan. Carefully run a knife around the edges of the cake to keep the sides from sticking when you flip it - next.
14. **BE CAREFUL**, this is the tricky part - wear gloves and take care not to burn yourself. Place serving pan on top of cake pan and while holding both together, invert pans so that serving tray is now on the bottom and cake pan is on the top, placing cake and pans back onto counter.
15. Using a fork, **SLOWLY** and **GENTLY** lift one side of the pan up and off the cake. You may have to do this at each corner if the cake is sticking. The fruit should not stick to the pan, but if it does, just remove it carefully and place it back on the cake.
The cake is so good that no one will be the wiser!

TIPS:

1. You don't have to put the crushed pineapple into the batter, but it makes the cake **VERY** moist.
2. It's a good idea to place one of those pre-fabricated foil oven liners you get at the grocery store under the oven's heating element, as sometimes the brown sugar mixture will work its way up and out of the pan and make quite a mess in the bottom of your oven. Or, get one of

the silicone oven liners at Bed, Bath, & Beyond. They don't affect the oven's heating profile as much as the foil liners, they last much longer than foil and are very easy to clean. I do not recommend placing the pan on a cookie sheet as it can cause uneven baking and the cake usually falls after it is taken out of the oven and flipped – I speak from (bad) experience!

3. The top of the cake will probably get very brown before it is finished baking. If it looks like it will burn, usually around 30-45 minutes, tear off a piece of foil and gently "tent" it over the top of the cake while it is still baking. Be sure to use the wooden skewer test **IN SEVERAL PLACES ON THE CAKE, ESPECIALLY THE CENTER** to check for doneness.
4. To cover the cake, use plastic wrap or Reynolds Non-Stick aluminum foil.
5. If you re-heat cake in the microwave, be careful not to burn your mouth on the brown sugar topping - it can get **VERY** hot after only about 60 seconds on high.
6. Corn meal - It is important that you use a **FINE** grind because if you don't, when you bite into the cake, there will be a gritty, sandy texture which is not good, obviously. Unfortunately, **FINE** ground cornmeal can sometimes be difficult to find since most corn meal is medium grind. There is a company whose products have become very prominent in most stores – an outfit called Bob's Red Mill (bobsredmill.com) makes a large variety of grain and bean-related products like rice flour, hummus, oats, meusli, grits, 13-bean soup mix, etc. **AND**, they also make **FINE** ground corn meal, aka corn meal **FLOUR**. Sometimes their products are in the specialty items area of the store and not in the baking products aisle, so you may have to do some searching. Most larger health food stores carry a full line of their products, but many of the grocery stores now carry their line as well.
7. Topping alternative: If you don't think you can get the cooked topping correct, you can do it this way: Melt your butter in a saucepan or in the microwave, being careful not to burn it, then pour it into the baking dish and sprinkle the brown sugar over it and then place your pineapple and cherries. This is how the original recipe read, however, I found that this method most definitely caused the brown sugar topping to overflow the pan making a mess in the oven, plus it made it more difficult to remove the pan cleanly than by using the cooked topping method described above. Your choice here.

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