

Cherry Amaretto Upside-down Skillet Cake – Comfort du Jour

A great meal deserves a sweet, delicious ending, and this one showcases the plump and luscious dark red cherries that have been everywhere this summer. The cake is moist and flavorful, rich with buttermilk, almond flour, eggs and real butter, and the buttery brown sugar topping is a little on the boozy side, plus the deep, dark sweet cherries. And the whole thing is elegantly draped with a dollop of amaretto-spiked whipped cream.

INGREDIENTS

4 Tbsp. butter
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup cane sugar
1.5 oz. amaretto
About 3 cups pitted fresh dark cherries

1 cup all-purpose flour* (see notes)
3/4 cup almond flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

3/4 cup cane sugar
1 stick unsalted butter, softened but not melted
2 large eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. almond extract
1 cup buttermilk*

Whipped cream for serving, if desired
1 Tbsp. amaretto (optional, for flavoring whipped cream)

*NOTES

Remember the rule for measuring flour? In baked goods such as this, using the correct amount will really make a difference. Dipping your measuring cup straight into the flour container is a sure-fire way to have a dry and crumbly cake. I trust a kitchen scale for most of my baking, but if you don't have one, follow the simple "fluff, sprinkle, level" method—fluff the flour with a whisk or fork, sprinkle it over the dry measuring cup to overflowing, level it off with the back of a knife.

Don't be tempted to substitute regular milk for the buttermilk in this recipe. The acidity in the buttermilk will lend a subtle tanginess to the cake, and it also reacts with the baking powder and soda for leavening.

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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. Place a 10" cast iron skillet over medium heat. Melt the butter, then add the brown sugar and cook until the sugar is dissolved, and the mixture appears lightly foamy.
3. Pour in the amaretto and swirl gently to evenly distribute throughout the butter and sugar mixture. Remove from heat and arrange the cherries close together over the mixture.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, almond flour, baking powder, soda, salt and cinnamon.
5. In a mixing bowl, beat together the butter and sugar until it's evenly combined and fluffy. Add one egg and beat until smooth, repeat with the second egg. Then, beat in vanilla and almond extracts, plus additional amaretto, if desired.
6. Beat in 1/3 of the flour mixture, blending only until dry ingredients are thoroughly incorporated. Beat in half the buttermilk until smooth. Repeat with flour and buttermilk, then the remaining flour.
7. Pour the batter evenly over the cherries in the skillet. Smooth the top with a rubber spatula to evenly distribute the thick batter.
8. Slide the skillet into the oven and bake about 50 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.
9. Allow cake to cool at least 15 minutes before inverting it to a large serving platter. To do this successfully, first slide a butter knife around the edges of the cake, to loosen any areas where it might be sticking. Center the plate, face-side down, over the skillet, then carefully hold the skillet and plate together and turn them over. I've found this to be easy, as long as you don't allow the cake to cool too long. If it sticks too much to release, turn the pan right side up again and briefly heat it over a low burner. This will melt and soften the butter again for easier release.

Allow the cake to cool completely. Cut into wedges and serve with a dollop of freshly whipped cream. I like to sweeten the cream slightly and add a touch of amaretto to further punctuate of almond flavor.

Store leftovers in the fridge, covered with foil or plastic wrap.