

Farmer's Chese Cake

Ingredients

120 g raisins and dried cranberries, soaked and drained
3 eggs
110 g brown sugar
450 g farmer's cheese
200 g sour cream
1 T lemon juice
1 tsp orange liquor
1 tsp vanilla
1 T orange rind
65 g buckwheat flour
250 g rhubarb, plums, apricots, or other fruit or berries

A few hours before starting to bake, pour boiling water over dried fruit to "plump." Let cool, drain the fruit and set aside. Chop them a bit if you like smaller pieces.

Heat the oven to 395 Fahrenheit (no fan.) Whip the eggs with sugar. If using a mixer, whip whole eggs for about 5 minutes. While eggs are in the mixer, combine farmer's cheese, sour cream, lemon juice, orange liquor, vanilla and orange rind. Mix to smooth the texture. Gradually and gently mix the whipped eggs into the farmer's cheese mixture, preferably by hand so as not to deflate the eggs. Sieve in buckwheat flour. Dust dried and fresh fruit with a bit of flour, then mix into the batter.

Pour batter in a greased (or baking paper lined) 9x13 inch baking dish. Use some of the fruit to decorate the cake. Bake for 40-45 minutes, until the cake has a slight golden color (it will stay mostly pale). Enjoy it warm, at room temperature, or cold, to your liking. Store in the fridge for 3-4 days.



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Variations and tips:

Experiment with different fruits and berries keeping in mind: plums bake both sweet and tart; rhubarb bakes tart; cherries and blueberries bake bland, so use frozen tart cherries and wild blueberries for better flavor; peaches and nectarines have consistently great flavor.

Think seasonal: during the winter season use different dried fruits (tart cherries, apples) and flavor the cake with a bit of cinnamon. Add sliced almonds or walnuts for nuttiness and crunch. Dried fruit can be soaked with cold water overnight, or with boiling water at least an hour before baking. Drain for at least 15 minutes and squeeze out excess water. Boiling water brings out more flavors.

Farmer's cheese is made from sour milk that is heated until milk solids start curdling and then drained from excess liquid. It has a wonderfully tangy flavor and some texture from the curd. Here in Atlanta, there are few places where farmer's cheese is available. Sprouts, Dekalb Farmer's Market and Buford Highway Farmer's Market have farmer's cheese. It is wonderful as spread on bread when flavored with herbs, or added to all kinds of cakes and pastries both as a filling, or into the dough/batter to make it more moist.

Recipe by Guest Chef Tiina D'Souza, EstoEtno Fine Bakery



ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN