



ANSON MILLS

Bundt de Noël (Christmas Morning Coffee Cake)

Yield

One 10-inch Bundt cake, serving 8 to 10

Time

20 minutes to put together, 50 to 55 minutes to bake

Baking Notes

Not all Bundt pans are great at “bundting.” A few different makes have gone in and out of our oven, and we can say without hesitation that the sturdy cast-aluminum models made by Nordicware, holder of the Bundt pan trademark, are by far the best. The pan’s heft means the cake bakes evenly, with a beautiful golden exterior, and the slick nonstick finish guarantees an easy release.

Should you happen to have homemade preserves on hand, by all means, crack them open! Having none ourselves, we purchased some very fancy, very pricey imports. The verdict: with no swirling, intoxicating notes of strawberry about them, both scored just a notch above *meh*. Much nicer in this cake were Bonne Maman preserves. Available in grocery stores nationwide, Bonne Maman preserves are not organic, but they *are* actually produced in France, where, as my French cooking teacher used to declare triumphantly, “You could eat a handful of American strawberries and they would never equal the flavor of *one* strawberry from the Provence!” Bonne Maman strawberry preserves contain no corn syrup. They do carry some natural pectin for thickness, which, for this cake, is not a bad thing. A 13-ounce jar will strain down to the 6 ounces of berries in heavy sauce required for the cake’s filling. Keep the strained-out portion to use as jelly or as a topping for ice cream.

We used a couple different brands of double-acting baking powder in making this cake, but Rumford was clearly the best. It left no bitterness or acrid notes in the crumb.

When filling the cake, the preserves are rather inclined to slip down in the batter. This is why we fill the prepared pan with three-quarters of the batter before adding the preserves, and spooning the remaining batter on the top. When the cake is inverted the preserves will find themselves nicely positioned in the center of the cake.

Equipment Mise en Place

For the cake, you will need a small medium-fine nonreactive strainer set over a bowl, a digital kitchen scale, a 12-cup Bundt pan, a large mixing bowl, a whisk, a small saucepan, a rubber spatula, a medium mixing bowl, a ladle, and a wire rack.

For the glaze, you will need a 2-cup liquid measuring cup or medium mixing bowl, a whisk, and a rimmed baking sheet to catch glaze runoff.

Ingredients

for the cake

1 jar (10 to 13 ounces) strawberry or sour cherry preserves (see Baking Notes)
14.5 ounces (about 3 cups) Anson Mills Colonial Style Fine Cloth-Bolted Pastry Flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
¾ teaspoon fine sea salt
7.5 ounces (15 tablespoons) unsalted European-style butter, plus additional for greasing the pan
10.5 ounces (1½ cups) sugar
12 ounces (1½ cups) sour cream
3 large eggs, beaten
4 teaspoons vanilla extract

for the glaze

6 ounces (1½ cups) confectioners' sugar, plus additional if needed
1 ounce (2 tablespoons) whole milk, plus additional if needed
1½ teaspoons finely grated zest plus 1½ teaspoons juice from 1 juicy lemon (use a Meyer lemon if you're able to get one)
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Make the cake: Spoon the preserves into a small medium-fine nonreactive strainer suspended over a bowl and allow them to drain, stirring occasionally. The drippy portion of the preserves will fall into the bowl, leaving 6 ounces or about ¾ cup of thick preserves coated with sauce. Turn the strained preserves into a bowl and set them aside.

2. Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position and heat the oven to 325 degrees. Butter a 12-cup Bundt pan. Turn the flour, baking powder, and salt into a large mixing bowl and whisk to combine. Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat and add the sugar. Stir until the mixture becomes sludgy and the sugar begins to melt but before the butter bubbles. Remove from the heat. In a medium bowl, whisk together the sour cream, eggs, and vanilla until thoroughly combined. Ladle some warm butter mixture into the egg mixture and whisk to warm. Add the remaining butter mixture to the eggs and combine well. Pour the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients and fold gently with a rubber spatula until a thick batter results. Don't worry about tiny lumps; do not overmix.

3. Spoon 35 ounces (about three-quarters) of the batter into the prepared pan and smooth with the back of a spoon. With a moistened finger, make a trough in the center of the ring of batter. Spoon the preserves into the trough. Scrape the remaining batter into the pan and use the back of a wet spoon to smooth the batter over the preserves. Bake the cake until it is nicely risen, light golden brown, and the center springs back when touched with a finger, about 50 minutes. Let the cake cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes, and then invert it onto the rack. Continue to let cool until just barely warm, about 1 hour.

4. Make the glaze: In a 2-cup liquid measuring cup or a medium bowl, whisk together the confectioners' sugar and milk until smooth. Stir in the lemon zest, juice, and vanilla. The glaze

should be fluid, but not outright runny. Adjust the consistency with a spoonful of sugar or a drop or two of milk, if needed.

5. Place cake on its rack on a rimmed baking sheet. Spoon the glaze over the cake, allowing it to drip down the sides. Feel free to spoon the still-pourable glaze from the baking-sheet floor and reglaze if you wish. Allow the glaze to harden for about 10 minutes before serving the cake.