

Spiced Pear Cake

For Topping:

- 2 1/2 firm pears
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar

For Cake:

- 2 1/2 cups plain flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup molasses
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten



Make Topping:

1. Peel and core pears and cut each into 8 wedges.
2. Melt butter in pan over moderate heat until foam subsides. Reduce heat to low, then sprinkle brown sugar over bottom of pan and cook, undisturbed, 3 minutes (not all sugar will be melted).
3. Arrange pears decoratively in an oiled cake tin and pour sugar over pears.

Make Cake:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Whisk together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and salt in a bowl. Whisk together molasses and boiling water in a small bowl. Beat together butter, brown sugar, and egg in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes, then alternately mix in flour mixture and molasses in 3 batches at low speed until smooth.
3. Pour batter over topping in cake tin, spreading evenly and being careful not to disturb pears, and bake in middle of oven until a tester comes out clean, 40 to 50 minutes.
4. Cool cake in tin on a rack 5 minutes. Run a thin knife around edge of tin, then invert a large plate with a lip over tin and, using pot holders to hold tin and plate tightly together, invert cake onto plate. Replace any pears that stick to skillet. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Goes well served with ice cream or cream.