

Old-Fashioned Strawberry Cake

Makes one 9-inch cake

As you may have noticed, there is no deep-frying in this book. Not because I don't enjoy the occasional donut, cruller, churro, or other deep-fried delight, but because: No, I will not be doing that. I will not heat up a large pot of oil and drop in the batter and fry, hoping I have not undercooked the insides or overly fried the outsides, then have to deal with the hot oil—even typing that feels exhausting. Not in my home, anyway. But the taste. The taste of a cake donut haunts me. Its vaguely vanilla flavor, deeply golden exterior, crumbly-yet-compact interior is hard to get without a fryer. Yet somehow this cake comes extremely close.

Ingredients

Cooking spray
2 cups/290g all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons/8g baking powder
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon/3g kosher salt
1 stick/4 ounces/115g unsalted butter, at room temperature
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup/70g granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup/75g light brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 large eggs
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup/180g buttermilk
10 ounces/295g strawberries, hulled and sliced $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick (or halved blackberries, blueberries, pitted sweet cherries, sliced peaches, or figs)
3 tablespoons demerara sugar (you can use granulated sugar in a pinch)

Instructions

- 1 Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray the bottom of a 9-inch cake pan with cooking spray and line with parchment paper (either cut to fit the bottom, or leaving some hanging over the edges for easy removal).
- 2 In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt together.
- 3 In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle (or in a large bowl with an electric hand mixer), beat the butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla together on medium-high, periodically scraping down the sides of the bowl to make sure everything incorporates, until the mixture is pale, light, fluffy, and creamy, about 5 minutes.
- 4 Add the eggs, one at a time, beating to blend after each addition. (This is a good time to scrape down the sides again.)
- 5 Reduce the mixer speed to low and carefully add half the flour mixture, followed by half the buttermilk. Repeat with the remaining flour mixture and buttermilk, beating just until no large lumps remain.
- 6 Using a spatula, gently fold in half the strawberries and transfer the batter to the prepared cake pan. Scatter with the remaining strawberries and sprinkle with demerara sugar. Bake until the cake is puffed, deeply golden brown, and pulling away at the sides, 45–50 minutes. (It should spring back slightly when pressed in the center and appear fully baked where the strawberries meet the cake.)
- 7 Let the cake cool completely before eating.