

Hawley Rhubarb Upside-Down Cake

from In Our Grandmothers' Kitchens

Ingredients:

for the topping:

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) sweet butter
3/4 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
2 cups rhubarb (1/2-inch chunks)

for the cake:

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, at room temperature
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon baking powder
1-3/4 cups flour
1/2 cup milk
2 teaspoons vanilla

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

First make the topping (which goes on the bottom!).

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Stir in the brown sugar and cook, stirring, until it melts and bubbles—3 to 4 minutes.

Transfer the brown-sugar mixture into a 9-inch-square cake pan. Spread it through the bottom of the pan. Arrange the rhubarb pieces on top as artistically as you can. (Mine weren't very artistic.)

For the cake cream together the butter and sugar. Beat in the eggs, 1 at a time. Add the baking powder and salt. Stir in the flour alternately with the milk, beginning and ending with the flour. Stir in the vanilla, and pour the batter over the rhubarb mixture.

Bake the cake until a toothpick inserted into the center (but not too far down; don't hit the rhubarb!) comes out clean, about 40 minutes. If the cake is brown but not done before this happens, decrease the oven temperature and continue baking.

Allow the cake to cool for 5 to 10 minutes. Loosen the edges with a knife, and invert the cake onto a serving plate held over the skillet. Turn upside-down. Remove pan.

Serve alone or with whipped cream. Serves 9.

I should think you could absolutely bake this pan in a 10-inch iron skillet (heating the butter and brown sugar in it first, and then piling on the other ingredients). I couldn't find my skillet, however, so I used a square pan and can only report on those results.