

Cranberry Upside-Down Cake

Courtesy of *In Our Grandmothers' Kitchens*

Ingredients:

for the upside-down topping:

1/2 stick butter (1/4 cup) plus a little more if needed
3/4 cup brown sugar
2 cups fresh cranberries

for the cake:

1/2 cup (1 stick) sweet butter at room temperature
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 pinch salt
1-1/2 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 skillet—a 9- or 10-inch cast-iron skillet, if possible. Stir in the brown sugar and cook, stirring, until it melts and bubbles—3 to 4 minutes.

If your brown sugar is old, it may have trouble melting properly, in which case you'll need to add a little more melted butter to it. Try to avoid this if you can; the cake is rich enough without it! I was recently stuck with old sugar, however, and had to punt.

If you're using the cast-iron skillet you may continue with the recipe at this stage and cook the cake in the skillet. If not, transfer the brown-sugar mixture into a 9- or 10-inch round cake pan. Spread it through the bottom of the pan. Arrange the cranberries on top as artistically as you can.

In a separate bowl cream together the butter and sugar. Beat in the eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in the baking powder and salt. Add the flour and milk alternately, beginning and ending with the flour. Stir in the vanilla.

Spoon the batter over the cranberries in the cake pan or skillet, and place the pan in the oven. Bake until the cake tests done (in about 40 minutes).

Let the cake stand for 10 minutes; then invert it onto a serving plate. You may need help with this if you use the cast-iron skillet as it feels a bit heavy during the inverting process.

This cake is best served slightly warm with or without a little whipped cream. Serves 6 to 8.