

Salt and Serenity

Cauliflower Cake

Adapted from Yotam Ottolenghi's book Plenty More

Serves 4-6

1 small cauliflower, outer leaves removed, broken into 1 ¼ -inch florets
5 shallots, peeled (6 ounce/170 g)
3 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary
7 eggs
1/2 cup basil leaves, chopped
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
1/3 teaspoon ground turmeric
2 ounces coarsely grated Parmesan
3 ounces coarsely grated Gruyere cheese
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 Tablespoon unsalted butter, melted, for brushing
1 ½ tablespoons white sesame seeds
2 Kumato or plum tomatoes, thinly sliced

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Place the cauliflower florets in a saucepan and add 1 teaspoon salt. Cover with water and simmer for 12 minutes, until the florets are quite soft. They should break when pressed with a spoon. Drain and set aside in a colander to dry.
3. Thinly slice 1 shallot. Set sliced shallot aside to use as a decorative topping on the cake. Coarsely chop remaining shallots. Place in a small pan with the oil and rosemary. Cook for 10 minutes over medium heat, stirring from time to time, until soft. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool.
4. Transfer the onion to a large bowl, add the eggs and basil, whisk well, and then add the flour, baking powder, turmeric, Parmesan, Gruyere, salt, and plenty of pepper. Whisk until smooth.

5. Spray the bottom and sides of 9-½ inch spring form pan with Pam cooking spray, and then line the base and sides with parchment paper. Brush the sides with melted butter, and toss the sesame seeds around the inside of the pan so that they stick to the sides. Spread cauliflower florets into an even layer in the pan.

6. Pour the egg mixture into the pan, spreading it evenly over the cauliflower. Arrange the tomato slices and reserved shallot rings on top. Place in the center of the oven and bake for 35-40 minutes, until golden brown and set; a knife inserted into the center of the cake should come out clean. Remove from the oven and leave for at least 20 minutes before serving. It needs to be served just warm, rather than hot, or at room temperature.