

Salt and Serenity

Rhubarb Upside-down Cake

Adapted from Johanne Killeen's recipe for Fresh Rhubarb Upside-down Baby Cakes. The recipe first appeared in the cookbook *"Baking with Julia"*, based on the PBS TV series.

6 stalks fresh rhubarb
½ cup dark brown sugar
2 ounces (½ a stick) unsalted butter
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1⅔ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1 cup sour cream (**not** low fat or fat free!)
4 ounces (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
Melted butter for greasing pan
Flour for dusting pan

1. Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350°F. Brush a light coating of melted butter on bottom and sides of 9 or 10 inch square cake pan. Dust with flour; tap out excess. Line buttered and floured pan bottom with a sheet of parchment paper, cut to fit. This will make turning the upside-down cake out of the pan very easy.
2. Wash rhubarb and cut each stalk in half widthwise. (Imagine you are cutting a hamburger bun, so that you have a top and a bottom half). Keeping the two halves together, slice rhubarb on the diagonal, into 2-inch lengths. Carefully transfer the cut rhubarb to a baking sheet, trying to keep the pieces in the order in which they were cut. This will make laying the rhubarb into a pretty chevron pattern much easier.
3. Whisk flour, baking powder, and salt together; reserve. In a separate bowl, stir vanilla into sour cream and set aside.
4. In a small skillet, melt 2 ounces butter. Add brown sugar and cook over medium heat until the sugar melts. Whisk until butter and sugar are well combined. Pour caramel into the prepared 9 or 10 inch square baking pan. You will need to use a

spatula to help spread it out. It won't completely cover every spot in the pan, but don't worry, it will spread out when you bake the cake. Arrange rhubarb over the layer of caramel in a chevron pattern. (See the video on my blog post to better understand how to do this) Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of granulated sugar over the layer of rhubarb. Set pan aside while you prepare the cake batter.

5. Beat granulated sugar and remaining 4 ounces of butter in a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, and beat on medium-high until light, fluffy, and pale. This will take at least 5-6 minutes. Be patient. Scrape down bowl as needed. Reduce speed to medium and add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition.
6. Remove bowl from mixer and scrape all the batter off the beater blade. Using a rubber spatula, carefully fold in the dry ingredients and the sour cream alternately – 3 additions of dry ingredients and 2 additions for sour cream. You will end up with a thick batter.
7. Spoon batter over the rhubarb and very carefully and gently smooth top with a rubber spatula. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a cake comes out clean. Remove pan from oven and set on a wire rack for 10 minutes to cool, before turning cake out of pan.
8. Lay a flat plate over the top of the cake pan. Wearing oven mitts, as the cake pan will still be hot, carefully flip the cake over onto the plate. Bang on the bottom of the pan for good measure, and then lift the pan off. If a few pieces of rhubarb stick to the pan, don't worry: just peel them off and arrange them back into the topping. If you took the time to line the pan with paper, it came out very easily.
9. Let cool for an additional hour before serving. Leftover cake can be wrapped in plastic wrap and stored in the fridge for up to 2 days.