



Gateau Monet aux Poires

Ingredients

3/4 cup + 1 Tablespoon all purpose flour
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 cup raw almonds
11 Tablespoons butter, softened
3/4 cup + 2 Tablespoons sugar
1 tsp vanilla
3 large eggs, beaten
5 just ripe pears, d'Anjou or Red Bartlett work well



Prep

Pre-heat the oven to 350 F. Wash the pears carefully but do not peel. Butter a 9 1/2 inch spring-form cake tin and line the base with baking parchment. Grind the almonds with the flour & baking powder in a food processor until almonds are finely ground.

Assembly

Beat the butter, sugar and vanilla together until white and fluffy. Beat in the eggs a little at a time, sprinkling in a spoonful of the flour mixture about halfway through to stop the eggs from curdling. Fold in the flour mixture gently but thoroughly. Batter will be thick. Spread batter evenly over the base of the prepared tin. If using a mixer, do not over beat.

Cut a thin slice from the bottom of each pear to make a flat base – this is so that your pears don't fall over during baking. Arrange the pears in a circle around the cake, with the stem end up. Leave a border of about 3/4 inch between the pear and the tin. Bake until pears are tender, the sides of the cake have pulled away from the tin and a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean. About 1 hour.

Transfer to a wire rack and cool for 15 minutes. Run a knife around the sides of the cake to loosen before un-molding. Then ease the cake off the tin base onto a serving dish.

Serves 10

Adapted from: Pear Almond Cake, Books for Cooks, London, United Kingdom

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Cook's Notes

Try to get the pears a day or two in advance and leave them on a window sill so that they have a chance to ripen a bit. You do not, however, want them to be very ripe as the juiciness will make it difficult for the cake to finish in the center. If you have very juicy pears, add an additional 1/4 cup of flour.

Serving Tips

To serve, slice into 10 servings, each with ½ a pear. Gently scoop out the core and replace with a dollop of whipped cream. Dust with confectioners' sugar. Drizzle with chocolate sauce if desired.

Here is a quick recipe for **chocolate sauce** from Books for Cooks. Heat 5T heavy cream in a small sauce pan until just below simmering. Remove at once from the heat. Add 2 ½ oz of dark or bittersweet chocolate broken or chopped into small pieces. Leave to melt for a minute, then stir until smooth and glossy.

Special Equipment

It is important to use a **9 ½ inch spring-form pan** for this cake. If you use another size you will have to adjust the baking time. If you don't use a spring-form pan you will not be able to display it and serving neat slices will be difficult.

You will also need **baking parchment** so that you will be able to move the cake onto a serving plate. This is usually available at Wild Oats or Kroger.

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