

SEPTEMBER

Baking School In-Depth: Fig and Apple Dapple Bundt Cake

A vintage recipe with some serious fall charm, this Fig and Apple Dapple Bundt Cake takes the classic cake and amplifies it with sweet, juicy figs from Valley Fig Growers. Deliciously tender and rich, this cake is full of chopped apples, pecans, California Dried Mission Figs, and warm spices. And you can't forget the irresistible buttery brown sugar caramel sauce that soaks in and is drizzled over the cake, adding rich, gooey texture to each bite. Bursting with rich notes of caramel, spice, and sweet fall fruits, this beautifully dappled cake will be the perfect warm, cozy finish to any autumn day.



INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

Great recipes require great ingredients. Here's how each of our recipe's simple ingredients contributes to making an unforgettable Fig and Apple Dapple Bundt Cake.

GRANULATED SUGAR: Sugar adds sweetness, and its hygroscopic nature also ensures a moist crumb. Colorless and neutral in flavor, granulated sugar allows the flavors of other ingredients to shine.

VEGETABLE OIL: Unlike cakes made with just butter, cakes made with oil tend to bake up loftier and with a more even crumb that stays moist and tender longer. That's because butter is only about 80% fat and cools solid, whereas vegetable oil is 100% fat and completely liquid. Oil often incorporates easier into batters and, because of its liquid state, keeps cake moist even as it cools.

EGGS: Eggs bring richness through their yolks and moisture through their whites, but they also help leaven baked goods. In this recipe, we use three large eggs for leavening, flavor, richness, and structure.

UNSALTED BUTTER: For this cake, we melt the butter so it incorporates smoothly. Although vegetable oil is the main fat used in the cake, we add unsalted butter as well to achieve a little extra buttery flavor and richness. Butter also helps the cake to set more solidly because it solidifies as it cools, which ultimately makes the cake easier to transfer out of your Bundt pan to slice and serve.

DARK BROWN SUGAR: Dark brown sugar typically contains nearly twice as much molasses as light brown sugar (6.5% compared to 3.5%), which gives it a richer caramel flavor and darker color. In this cake, it also provides a little extra acidity to react with the baking soda called for in the recipe.

VANILLA EXTRACT: Combined with the spices, fruit, and caramel notes of this cake, vanilla is the flavor that makes this cake sing. It's an ingredient that adds instant depth and complexity in just a tablespoon.



INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR: This cake is rich but also has a delicate enough crumb to allow for the caramel sauce to soak in and make the cake even more tender. With a protein content that typically ranges from 10% to 12%, all-purpose flour provides the structure necessary for the cake to hold its shape and the gorgeous design while also maintaining a beautiful texture inside.

GROUND CINNAMON, NUTMEG, AND ALLSPICE: Serving up a healthy dose of sweet heat, the combination of cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice provides warmth and depth to this delicious fall cake.

BAKING SODA: Baking soda is pure sodium bicarbonate and requires an acid be present in the batter (in this case, the molasses in the dark brown sugar) to help tenderize baked goods. Baking soda releases most of its gas immediately once combined with an acid and moisture. If too much is used, the final baked product may have a slightly soapy taste. If too little is used, making the batter too acidic, the final product may not brown adequately.

KOSHER SALT: We bake with kosher salt because, unlike most commercial salt, it doesn't contain iodine, making it taste purer and more palatable. Also, the salt crystals are larger. Table salt is much finer, so you would use half of what a recipe with kosher salt calls for. If you're ever unsure that you're using the correct amount of salt, use the weight measurement provided.

GOLDEN DELICIOUS APPLES: Golden Delicious apples are often pale green to golden yellow in color and speckled. Firm, crisp, and white-fleshed, these apples are mostly sweet but with a hint of acid to balance their honeyed flavor.

TOASTED PECANS: Providing both crunch and delicious, toasted flavor, the pecans in this recipe add both texture and flavor. We use Schermer Pecans for a fresh and natural nutty crunch.

DRIED MISSION FIGS: Also known as Black Mission figs, Mission figs are named after the Spanish Franciscan missionaries who cultivated them in California in the 1700s. Naturally sweet, these figs are full of robust, fruity flavor and delicate seeds that add delicious texture. They have a deep purple skin that appears black when dried and a slight pinkish hue on the inside. In this cake, they provide a sweet, chewy bite that plays beautifully with the rich fall flavors of the rest of the cake. We use Orchard Choice California Dried Mission Figs from Valley Fig Growers in this recipe.

QUICK CARAMEL SAUCE: This sauce not only acts as a delicious drizzle over your finished cake but also soaks in like a tres leches or poke cake to create the ultimate caramelly apple cake. Unlike most caramels that require a candy thermometer and special attention, this one is quick and simple.



FIG AND APPLE DAPPLE
BUNDT CAKE



FIG AND APPLE DAPPLE BUNDT CAKE

Makes 1 (15-cup) Bundt cake

Complete with notes of caramel, spice, sweet fall fruits, and nutty pecans, this Fig and Apple Dapple Bundt Cake promises a sweet taste of fall in every bite. Reminiscent of caramel apples and crisp autumn days spent at the apple orchard, it's the perfect cake to kick off the fall baking season.

- 1⅓ cups (267 grams) granulated sugar
- ¾ cup (160 grams) vegetable oil
- ⅔ cup (150 grams) unsalted butter, melted
- ⅓ cup (73 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature
- 1 tablespoon (13 grams) vanilla extract
- 3 cups (375 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (16 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking soda
- 1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- 3 cups (375 grams) ⅓- to ½-inch-chopped peeled Golden Delicious apples
- 1 cup (113 grams) chopped toasted pecans
- 1 cup (165 grams) chopped dried Mission figs*

Quick Caramel Sauce (recipe follows)

Garnish: chopped toasted pecans

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat granulated sugar, oil, melted butter, brown sugar, eggs, and vanilla at medium-low speed until well combined, about 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together 3 cups (375 grams) flour, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, nutmeg, and allspice. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to sugar

mixture, beating until combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. (Batter will be quite thick.)

4. In a medium bowl, stir together apples, pecans, figs, and remaining 2 tablespoons (16 grams) flour. Fold apple mixture into batter.

5. Spray a 15-cup Nordic Ware Anniversary Bundt Pan with baking spray with flour. Spoon batter into prepared pan. Tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter several times to settle batter and release any air bubbles.

6. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking and loosely covering with foil to prevent excess browning, if necessary.

7. Poke hot cake all over with a wooden skewer; pour ¾ cup (about 200 grams) Quick Caramel Sauce onto cake in pan, spreading evenly with a small offset spatula. Let cake cool completely in pan on a wire rack. (See Note.) Transfer remaining Quick Caramel Sauce to a small microwave-safe bowl; cover and refrigerate.

8. When ready to serve, using a small offset spatula, gently loosen cooled cake from center and edges of pan. Invert cake onto a cake plate.

9. Heat remaining Quick Caramel Sauce on high in 10-second intervals, stirring between each, until melted and smooth. Using a large spoon, spoon sauce on top of cooled cake, smoothing and spreading as needed. Garnish with pecans, if desired.

**We used Orchard Choice California Dried Mission Figs from Valley Fig Growers.*

Note: *This cake will take several hours to cool completely and only gets better with age. If you make it in the morning, it will be fully cooled by the end of the day. If you make it in the evening, be prepared to let it cool overnight.*

QUICK CARAMEL SAUCE

Makes about 1½ cups

- 1 cup (220 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- ¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup (60 grams) heavy whipping cream
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons (30 grams) dark spiced rum
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract

1. In a medium saucepan, combine brown sugar, butter, cream, and salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring frequently; cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in rum and vanilla.



MAKING THE CAKE

This cake is rich, fruity, and full of festive fall flavors. Even better, it comes together in only a few simple steps.



1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat granulated sugar, oil, melted butter, brown sugar, eggs, and vanilla at medium-low speed until well combined, about 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together 3 cups (375 grams) flour, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, nutmeg, and allspice. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to sugar mixture, beating until combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. (Batter will be quite thick.)

MAKING THE CAKE



4. In a medium bowl, stir together apples, pecans, figs, and remaining 2 tablespoons (16 grams) flour. Fold apple mixture into batter. This coating of flour will help to absorb some of the liquid released by the fruit as it bakes while also helping to keep the other ingredients in place until the crumb has set.

MAKING THE CAKE



5. Spray a 15-cup Nordic Ware Anniversary Bundt Pan with baking spray with flour. Spoon batter into prepared pan. Tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter several times to settle batter and release any air bubbles.
6. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking and loosely covering with foil to prevent excess browning, if necessary.

BUNDT BASICS

Baking in a Bundt pan often requires a little special attention. They're notoriously prone to sticking, so we're giving you all the tips and tricks for a perfect Bundt every time.



- Because Bundt pans can be intricately patterned, it's especially important to grease your pan properly. Whereas most pans simply require a quick coat of cooking spray, Bundt pans require an extra layer of protection. Combining a fat (oil or shortening) and flour is key to creating a protective barrier around the cake that'll allow it to seamlessly slide out of the pan after baking. We use baking spray with flour, sprayed from several inches away. A little distance between the nozzle and pan helps to ensure that the spray is distributed evenly.
- With Bundt pans, you don't want to use butter as your fat because the milk solids in it can cause the cake to stick.
- If you don't have access to baking spray with flour, you can create your own coating of fat and flour. Using a paper towel or pastry brush (not silicone, as the bristles will create streaks), you can apply a thin layer of neutral oil or melted shortening. Then, you'll sprinkle in flour, rotating and tapping the pan to make sure every detail and divot of the pan is thoroughly coated before tapping out and discarding any excess.
- If you're accidentally a little heavy-handed while greasing your pan and notice the coating running or creating pools of excess oil in the bottom of your pan, you can either clean it out with a paper towel and try again or blot away any excess with a dry paper towel. You can also use a pastry brush to help remove or spread out the excess.
- Once you've added your batter, it's incredibly important to tap the pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter to get rid of any air bubbles in the batter. This will ensure that the batter fills every crevice of the pan and that there aren't any big air bubbles in the middle of your Bundt when you go to slice it.
- Once your cake is out of the oven, you'll want to let it cool before inverting it. This will allow the cake to set slightly and also ensure that the cake doesn't collapse once it's turned out of the pan. For this recipe, because the cake gets a caramel soak, the cake will need to cool fully in the pan before being inverted.

CREATING THE CARAMEL

An essential part of apple dapple cakes, the caramel soak and drizzle of this cake ensures a deliciously moist texture as well as delicious caramel flavor throughout



1. In a medium saucepan, combine brown sugar, butter, cream, and salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring frequently; cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in rum and vanilla. When adding the alcohol and vanilla, be sure to use caution, as the mixture will bubble up. If you'd like to omit the rum, water can be substituted 1:1 by volume.

THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Now that the caramel sauce is made, it's time to let it soak in and set before slicing and serving to those eagerly awaiting a taste



1. Poke hot cake all over with a wooden skewer; pour $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (about 200 grams) Quick Caramel Sauce onto cake in pan, spreading evenly with a small offset spatula. Let cake cool completely in pan on a wire rack. (See Note.) Transfer remaining Quick Caramel Sauce to a small microwave-safe bowl; cover and refrigerate.



2. When ready to serve, using a small offset spatula, gently loosen cooled cake from center and edges of pan. Invert cake onto a cake plate.



3. Heat remaining Quick Caramel Sauce on high in 10-second intervals, stirring between each, until melted and smooth. Using a large spoon, spoon sauce on top of cooled cake, smoothing and spreading as needed. Garnish with pecans, if desired.