

Apple snack cake

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There are few things I love more than a cake of the “snack” variety. A snack cake is as special as any celebration cake (i.e.: birthday cake), but does not require an “event,” in order to be enjoyed. Snack cakes are single layer cakes. They are after school cakes, they are picnic cakes, they are Sunday night dinner cakes – or even Wednesday night dinner cakes. They come together quickly and are consumed just as fast – except when they are not, and then a leftover slice is the perfect accompaniment to your morning coffee, standing at the kitchen sink, cake in-hand (a plate would be superfluous), crumbs falling, as you ponder the day ahead. Or wrap said leftover in plastic wrap, and stick it in a lunch box – I mean a homemade slice of cake discovered by your little one in her lunch box? School lunch doesn’t get much better than that.

And if your snack cake is topped with sliced (red-hued) apples (freshly picked from your local orchard, perhaps) and generously sprinkled with Turbinado sugar (crunchy, brown/raw sugar), well then your fall just got about a million times tastier – you’re welcome.

Good to know

This oil-based cake is baked in an 8-inch round cake pan, but would likely work in an 8-inch square pan, as well. It has a tight, moist crumb, and because the recipe calls for brown sugar, and only a bit of granulated, it has a slightly molasses-y/caramel-like vibe that marries beautifully with the apples.

Leave the skins on your (red) apple slices – for color and texture, and be

generous with the final sprinkling of sugar: it provides the most-crackly and sparkly of lids for this most special of cakes. A dusting of confectioner’s sugar post-bake is pretty and delicious; and a scoop of vanilla ice cream atop a warm slice, to close out a regular-old weeknight dinner, truly is all that and then some.

Ingredients:

About 1 1/2 small red apples, such as Gala or Macintosh
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
3/4 tsp table salt
2/3 cup vegetable oil
1 cup light brown sugar
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 egg
1 yolk
2 tsp pure vanilla extract
2/3 cup sour cream
Turbinado sugar for generously sprinkling
Confectioner’s sugar for dusting
Vanilla ice cream or whipped cream, for serving

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350-degrees. Generously grease an 8-inch cake pan with cooking spray or softened butter and line the bottom with parchment. Set aside.

Slice the whole apple in half, and then cut all three halves into eight pieces, about 1/4-inch thick, removing the core as you do so.

Combine the flour, baking powder and salt in a small bowl and whisk to combine. Set aside.

In a medium-sized bowl, combine the oil and sugars and whisk vigorously to combine. And the egg, yolk, and vanilla, and whisk again. Add the



sour cream and whisk a final time.

Add the dry ingredients to the wet and with a rubber spatula, gently fold to combine. Do not over mix. Stop folding when there is still a streak of flour or two.

Transfer the batter to the prepared pan and decoratively place the apple slices on top, until most of the top is covered.

Generously sprinkle the cake with Turbinado sugar and place in the preheated oven for about 50 minutes, rotating the cake at 30 minutes and testing it for doneness at 45. The cake can be pulled from the oven when a tester inserted in the center comes out with only a moist crumb or two and the cake has started to pull away from the sides of the pan.

Once cooled enough to handle, run a paring knife around the edge of the pan to release the cake, and invert it right side up on to a serving platter or cake stand. Serve slices warm or at room temperature, dusted with confectioner’s sugar and with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream. •

Jessie is a baker and cookbook author; you can learn more about her through her website jessiesheehanbakes.com.