



ANSON MILLS

Sticky Sorghum Pudding

Yield

6 servings

Time

About 35 minutes to prep and 40 to 50 minutes to bake

Baking Notes

Medjool dates are soft dates and considered king of dates. During the autumn months they should be gooey and yielding. If their outer skins are leathery and if the dates feel firm and resistant, it's not good. We made a cake with leathery dates, and both the flavor and texture suffered.

As for sorghum, we laud it elsewhere on the site. Oh, and within a year or so, look for Anson Mills to produce its own sorghum from heirloom seeds!

Most recipes for this cake bake it in a shallow square or round pan. But because we like this dessert in particular for the holidays, we put it into a 6-cup Bundt pan. Beautiful presentation, yes? We like the Bundt pan in particular because the pokey pocks we create in the baked cake for impregnating the interior with sauce end up on the *bottom* of the cake and remain unseen. This is not to speak ill of the more casual 8-inch pan option, but mind the bake times: they are different.

This is not a difficult recipe. It does, however, have a number of apparently isolated steps in advance of assembly. Otherwise, piece of cake.

We serve the cake with its some of its sticky sauce as well as whipped cream. It would be just as fabulous with Stirred Custard Sauce instead of whipped cream. Just don't skip the sauce.

Equipment Mise en Place

For the pudding, you will need a digital kitchen scale; a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan; a medium bowl; a fine-mesh strainer; a 6-cup Bundt pan or an 8-inch square baking dish; two small bowls; a whisk; a food processor; a rubber spatula; a stand mixer fitter with the flat beater; a chopstick or skewer; a wire rack; and a serving plate.

For the sauce, you will need a small saucepan, a fine-mesh strainer, a small heatproof bowl, a whisk, and a small pitcher or bowl.

For the whipped cream, you will need a large mixing bowl and a whisk (ideally, a balloon whisk). (Alternatively, you may use a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment.)

Ingredients

for the pudding

7 or 8 ounces whole milk
0.3 ounces (1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon) loose Earl Grey tea leaves
8 ounces Medjool dates, pitted and coarsely chopped
½ teaspoon baking soda
6 ounces (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) Anson Mills Colonial-Style Fine Cloth-Bolted Pastry Flour,
plus additional for dusting the pan
¾ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
0.75 ounce (1 tablespoon) sorghum
0.5 ounces (1 tablespoon) bourbon
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2.5 ounces (5 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus additional for greasing
the pan
4 ounces (about ⅔ cup packed) dark brown sugar
2 large eggs, room temperature

for the sauce

3 ounces (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter
2 ounces (about ¼ cup very firmly packed) dark brown sugar
1.5 ounces (about 2 tablespoons) sorghum
4 ounces (½ cup) heavy cream
⅛ teaspoon fine sea salt
0.5 ounces (1 tablespoon) bourbon

for the whipped cream

8 ounces (1 cup) heavy cream
1 tablespoon granulated sugar

Directions

1. Make the pudding: In a small saucepan, bring the milk to a boil over medium-high heat (use 7 ounces of milk if your dates are very moist and gooey or 8 ounces if they're drier and firmer). As soon as the milk boils, turn off the heat, sprinkle the tea leaves over the surface, and stir. Let the tea steep for 5 to 7 minutes. Meanwhile, put the dates into a medium bowl and set a fine-mesh strainer over the bowl. When the tea has finished brewing, pour it through the strainer over the dates. Add the baking soda and stir, making sure the dates are fully submerged. Set aside until the dates are softened and cooled, 20 to 30 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, adjust an oven rack to the lower middle position and heat the oven to 325 degrees. Generously butter a 6-cup Bundt pan or an 8-inch square baking dish, making sure to coat every crevice of the Bundt pan. If using a Bundt, dust the pan with flour and knock out the excess. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt.

3. Turn the dates and their soaking liquid into a food processor and add the sorghum, bourbon, and vanilla. Process until smooth, about 1 minute, scraping down the bowl once or twice. Transfer the date purée to a small bowl.

4. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the flat beater, cream together the butter and brown sugar on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes, scraping down the bowl once or twice with a rubber spatula. Add the eggs one at a time; beat for about 30 seconds after each and scrape down the bowl. The mixture will appear curdled; don't give it a second thought. With the mixer running on low speed, alternate adding the flour mixture in three additions and the date purée in two additions, beginning and ending with the flour. After the last addition of flour, mix just until some streaks of flour remain. Disengage the bowl from the mixer and fold the batter with a rubber spatula, scraping along the bottom and sides of the bowl, until homogenous. Spoon the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the surface. Bake the cake until the surface springs back when lightly pressed with a finger, 40 to 45 minutes if using a Bundt pan or 45 to 50 minutes if using a square baking dish; rotate the pan halfway through the baking time.

5. *While the cake bakes, make the sauce:* In a small heavy-bottomed saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat and cook until the milk solids in the bottom of the pan are brown and the butter smells rich and nutty, about 8 minutes. Pour the butter through a fine-mesh strainer set over a small heatproof bowl, leaving the milk solids in the saucepan. Wash and dry the saucepan, and then return the strained browned butter to the pan. Add the brown sugar and sorghum and set the pan over medium heat. Cook, whisking constantly, until the mixture is simmering, glossy, and homogenous, about 3 minutes. Whisk in the cream and salt, return to a simmer, and cook, whisking frequently, until the sauce is thick enough to lightly coat a metal spoon and has reduced to $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups, about 5 minutes. Off heat, whisk in the bourbon and transfer the sauce to a small pitcher or bowl. It will thicken as it cools.

6. When the cake has finished baking, remove it from the oven; leave the oven on. Using a chopstick or skewer, poke holes in the cake, spacing them about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart and stopping shy of touching the bottom. Slowly drizzle about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the sauce over the cake; it's fine if some of the sauce runs down the inside of the pan. Return the cake to the oven and bake for 5 minutes.

7. Set the cake on a wire rack. If you made a Bundt cake, let it cool for 10 minutes, and then invert a serving platter over the cake. Holding the two together, re-invert. Lift off the pan and let the cake cool until just warm, 30 to 45 minutes. If you made a square cake, serve it directly from the dish. (It can be served at room temperature, but warm is better.)

8. *Whip the cream:* About 15 minutes before serving, put a large mixing bowl and a whisk (ideally, a balloon whisk) into the refrigerator to chill. Add the cream and sugar to the bowl and whisk until the mixture thickens and forms billowy mounds. (Alternatively, whip the cream and sugar in a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment.)

9. To serve, cut the pudding into wedges or rectangles. Dollop each piece with whipped cream, drizzle the cream with sauce, and serve right away.