

## Carlo's Florentine Apple Cake

Serves: 8

Preparation time: 30-40 mins

Cooking time: 1 hour at 190 C (375 F)



### Ingredients:

120g (4oz) butter plus little more for lining cake tin

handful breadcrumbs

2 Granny Smith apples, or similar

300g (10oz) white granulated sugar plus little more for dusting cake

zest of a big lemon

120g (4oz) plain flour

60ml (¼ cup) milk

1 tbsp instant yeast

good-sized handful toasted pine nuts

good-sized handful dried currants

3 large eggs

pinch salt

### Method:

1. Butter and line an 8" cake tin or loaf tin of similar volume. For best results, brush the base and sides with melted butter, line with baking paper, butter again, and coat with breadcrumbs.
2. Peel, halve and core the apples. Then cut into thin slices, no more than 2mm wide. Set aside some of the slices to cover the top of the cake.
3. Beat butter and sugar by hand or in a mixer until creamy. Add zest and milk and beat again. Then add flour, apples, yeast, pine nuts, currants, eggs and salt and mix again. It doesn't matter if the apple slices break up a bit, but don't blend them to a pulp.
4. Pour mix into tin, decorate with reserved apple slices and sprinkle on sugar.
5. Bake in middle of oven at 190 C (375 F) for approx one hour. Check the cake after 50 mins. It is ready when it has risen by approx 50%, the top is golden brown, but the middle is still very moist, even runny. If you can see uncooked batter through the cracks in the surface but it is a nice golden brown colour already, give it another 5 mins but no more.
6. Let cool slightly, remove from tin and cool some more on a wire rack.

*I was taught how to make this cake by Carlo Middione, who learnt it from his father, who lived and trained in Italy. Carlo himself has 50 years of culinary experience and now runs an excellent Italian restaurant in San Francisco called Vivande. I think the cake is delicious. If possible, serve it while still warm, with coffee, vin santo, cold zabaglione or ice cream. I think it goes well with wildflower honey ice cream. It will keep well in the fridge for a week.*



#### Granny Smith facts:

- Who was Granny Smith? The apple is named after Maria Ann Smith, who first propagated the variety in Australia in 1868, apparently by chance. It is thought to be a cross between a wild species and a domesticated one. Maria and her husband had been recruited to come to New South Wales from England 30 years earlier due to their agricultural skills.
- The apple was then widely grown in New Zealand, then introduced to England in 1935 and the USA in 1972.
- A fresh Granny Smith will be bright green, firm, heavy, shiny and with a tight skin, as depicted on the logo of Apple Records, known for releasing Beatles tunes from 1968 onwards (and for fighting with Apple Computers over use of the apple).
- Granny Smiths are great for eating, cooking and salads as they are so juicy, crunchy and tart. They also go brown less quickly than other apples once cut. To ensure your slices don't go brown you can rub them with a wedge of lemon.