

Babka Yablochnaya

Apple Charlotte with Apricot Sauce

Submitted by Kathy Stanton

Serves 8

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 lb plus 3 Tbsp unsalted butter, clarified
- 16 slices (1/2" thick) homemade-style white bread, trimmed of all crusts
- 5 lbs tart red apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced (5 quarts)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Apricot Sauce:

- 1 1/2 cups apricot preserves (12 oz)
- 2 Tbsp cold water
- 1/4 cup applejack or Calvados

Directions

1. With a pastry brush, lightly coat the bottom and sides of a 1 1/2 quart, 3- to 3 1/2-inch-deep charlotte or other straight-sided mold with the tablespoon of softened butter.
2. Pour all but 3 Tbsp of the clarified butter into a large bowl. With a sharp knife, cut 3 slices of the bread into 6 triangles by slicing them in half diagonally. Cut another 7 slices of the bread in half. One at a time, briefly dip the bread triangles into the bowl of clarified butter and lay them side by side in the bottom of the mold. With a small, sharp knife, trim the triangles so that their points meet in the middle and no spaces show between the slices. Now dip the bread halves in the butter and stand them upright around the sides of the mold, overlapping them slightly. The bread will rise slightly above the top of the mold.
3. Cut another 3 slices of the bread into 1-inch squares. Heat the 3 reserved Tbsp clarified butter in a heavy 10- to 12-inch skillet set over high heat and drop in the bread squares. Turning them about constantly with a wooden spoon, cook the squares for 2-3 minutes, until they are lightly and evenly colored on all sides. Remove the browned bread squares from the pan with a slotted spoon and set aside.
4. In a 4-quart casserole combine the apples, sugar, and water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then cover tightly, reduce the heat to low, and simmer 30 minutes, or until the apples are tender and show no resistance when pierced with the tip of a sharp knife. Uncover and cook over high heat, stirring frequently, for about 15 minutes, or until more of the liquid has evaporated and the apples become a

thick, coarse puree. Stir in the cinnamon and refrigerate the puree until well chilled.



5. When ready to assemble and bake the dessert, stir the browned bread squares into the thick apple puree and pour the mixture into the prepared mold. Do not be concerned if the filling rises above the rim of the mold; the apple puree will subside as it bakes.
6. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Cut 2 of the remaining slices of bread in half, dip them in the butter and place them on top of the filling. Cut the remaining slice into narrow strips, dip them into the butter and arrange them around the top to cover the exposed areas.
7. Bake in the center of the oven for 1 hour, or until the bread is golden brown. Cool for 30 minutes at room temperature, then invert a flat serving platter on top and, grasping the plate and mold firmly together, turn them over. Let the mold rest in this fashion for about 30 minutes before gently lifting it off the cake.



APRICOT SAUCE: With the back of a large spoon rub the apricot preserves through a fine sieve set over a 1-quart saucepan. Add the water and cook over moderate heat for about 10 minutes, stirring constantly until the sauce is thick enough to run sluggishly off a spoon when it is lifted from the pan. Off the heat, stir in the applejack or Calvados.

Either pour the sauce over the top and sides of the unmolded apple charlotte, or serve it separately in a bowl.