

Gâteau Breton with Apricot Filling

COOK'S
ILLUSTRATED

✓ WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Making a traditional gâteau Breton with a dense yet tender crumb calls for mixing a thick batter made primarily of butter, sugar, egg yolks, and flour, which is baked with a thin layer of jam running through its center. To avoid introducing too much air into the batter, which would lead to a fluffy, airy texture, we creamed the butter and sugar for only 3 minutes before adding the yolks and flour. Briefly freezing a layer of the batter in the cake pan helped us spread a bright apricot filling onto the batter. The pan then went back into the freezer to firm so that the top layer of batter could also easily be added. Finally, by making a homemade filling from dried apricots, we ensured both vibrant flavor and the thick consistency needed to make layering the cake in the pan a breeze.

INGREDIENTS

[Print Shopping List](#)

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 8

Filling

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried California apricots, chopped
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (2 $\frac{1}{3}$ ounces) sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Cake

- 16 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons (6 $\frac{1}{8}$ ounces) sugar
- 6 large egg yolks (1 lightly beaten with 1 teaspoon water)
- 2 tablespoons dark rum
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

We strongly prefer the flavor of California apricots in the filling. Mediterranean (or Turkish) apricots can be used, but increase the amount of lemon juice to 2 tablespoons. This cake is traditionally served plain with coffee or tea but can be dressed up with fresh berries, if desired.

1. FOR THE FILLING: Process water and apricots in blender until uniformly pureed, about 2 minutes. Transfer puree to 10-inch nonstick skillet and stir in sugar. Set skillet over medium heat and cook, stirring frequently, until puree has darkened slightly and rubber spatula leaves distinct trail when dragged across bottom of pan, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer filling to bowl and stir in lemon juice. Refrigerate filling until cool to touch, about 15 minutes.

2. FOR THE CAKE: Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9-inch round cake pan.

3. Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat butter on medium-high speed until smooth and lightened in color, 1 to 2 minutes. Add sugar and continue to beat until pale and

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| 2 | cups (10 ounces) all-purpose flour | fluffy, about 3 minutes longer. Add 5 egg yolks, one at a time, and beat until combined. Scrape down bowl, add rum and vanilla, and mix until incorporated, about 1 minute. Reduce speed to low, add flour and salt, and mix until flour is just incorporated, about 30 seconds. Give batter final stir by hand. |
| ½ | teaspoon Salt | |

4. Spoon half of batter into bottom of prepared pan. Using small offset spatula, spread batter into even layer. Freeze for 10 minutes.

5. Spread ½ cup filling in even layer over chilled batter, leaving ¾-inch border around edge (reserve remaining filling for another use). Freeze for 10 minutes.

6. Gently spread remaining batter over filling. Using offset spatula, carefully smooth top of batter. Brush with egg yolk wash. Using tines of fork, make light scores in surface of cake, spaced about 1 ½ inches apart, in diamond pattern, being careful not to score all the way to sides of pan. Bake until top is golden brown and edges of cake start to pull away from sides of pan, 45 to 50 minutes. Let cake cool in pan on wire rack for 30 minutes. Run paring knife between cake and sides of pan, remove cake from pan, and let cool completely on rack, about 1 hour. Cut into wedges and serve.

