**Maple Pecan Pear Upside-Down Cake**

This topsy-turvy cake is a must this time of year. Dried cherries, D'anjou pears, maple syrup, brown sugar and butter caramelize in the pan while the buttermilk batter produces a dense, moist layer.

*Recipe by Jeff Wolfe*Kitchen Tested http://s0.wp.com/wp-content/themes/vip/pgoa-main/images/icon_yes.png?m=1391174671g

* **Yield** 8 servings
* **Prep** 30 mins
* **Cook** 50 mins

A humble cake to please friends and family

Some serve this cake with ice cream or whipped cream, but this really isn't needed. A glass of cold milk, however, is a welcome accompaniment. The cake is especially delicious when still slightly warm.

**INGREDIENTS:**

Topping:

1. **1/2** cup apple, cherry or cranberry juice
2. **1/2** cup dried cherries
3. **3** tablespoons butter
4. **2/3** cup packed light brown sugar
5. **1/4** cup maple syrup
6. **1** red D'anjou pear, barely ripe, sliced
7. **1/2** cup pecan halves

Cake:

1. **1 3/4** cups all-purpose flour
2. **1 1/2** teaspoons baking powder
3. **1/2** teaspoon baking soda
4. **1/4** teaspoon salt
5. **1/3** cup butter, softened
6. **2/3** cup granulated sugar
7. **1 1/2** teaspoons vanilla extract
8. **1** egg
9. **1/2** cup buttermilk

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. To prepare topping, pour juice into a small saucepan and bring to a boil; add dried cherries. Set aside.
3. Place butter in a 10-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Sprinkle brown sugar evenly over butter, patting it down with your fingers. Pour maple syrup over brown sugar mixture. Do not stir.
4. Drain cherries, reserving both juice and cherries. Arrange pear slices, cherries and pecans over sugar mixture in skillet.
5. To prepare cake, sift together flour, baking powder, soda and salt. In another bowl, beat butter with an electric mixer until smooth. Gradually add granulated sugar and continue beating until fluffy (about 3 minutes). Beat in vanilla and egg.
6. Pour reserved cherry-soaking liquid into a measuring cup, and add buttermilk to equal 2/3 cup.
7. Alternately add 1/3 of flour mixture and 1/3 of buttermilk mixture to butter mixture, beating gently after each addition. Repeat with remaining flour and buttermilk mixtures. Do not overbeat.
8. Spoon batter over  fruit and topping, spreading lightly.
9. Bake about 45 minutes, until cake is golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove from oven and cool 5 minutes. Invert onto a serving plate. Serve warm or at room temperature.

*Recipe by Crescent Dragonwagon*