Winter 12-2017

Burnt Sugar Cake- Recipe

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Foodways

Informant: Terri Robb (LDS) was born in Ogden Utah in August 1966 and moved around all over the western United States due to her father’s forest ranger career. She is a great mother to three kids, two girls and one boy. She does not yet have any grandkids but is anxiously waiting for them. She is 51, and has been married to my father Stephen Robb for 32 years. She loves to cook and bake and there is no doubt that was a big reason they fell in love, his love for food and her love for baking were the perfect match. She has a knack for everything creative from decorating to her baking, to her excellent quilt making.

Context: I was talking with my mom (Terri) and my grandma over thanksgiving dinner, we were sitting around the dinner table at my house and my mom said to my grandma, “You need to make me a Burnt sugar cake soon”, my mom typically tells her that every time she comes over. She is the only one in my family that can make it correctly it is a very hard recipe to perfect and she is the only one that has perfected it. Everyone in the family just laughed and looked at each other, then proceeded to ask her to make other desserts that they love but my mom was dead set on getting that cake. Everyone knows that my mom loves that cake and you can always expect to have that cake on her birthday. The funny thing is no one really likes it but her in our immediate family it is extremely rich, and most can only eat two or three bites at a time. I told her I was going talk to her about the cake after dinner was over.

Text: There is nothing better than burnt sugar cake when it’s made right, oh my gosh it is to die for! [Laughs] not to mention no one else likes it so I get the whole things to myself! Your granny makes it the best, when I make it, [Pauses for a moment] it ain’t pretty, it’s not just burnt sugar its scorched sugar cake. Your grandma got the recipe from a forest rangers wife when we lived in Mountain City, Nevada. I’m glad we met her because I don’t know what I would do without my burnt sugar cake. Oh, my goodness [Laughs] when we me and your dad got married I invited mom over to teach me how to make it and I ruined one of our brand-new pots by burning the sugar to much, that was a mess, we ended up just tossing the pan there was no way to save that
thing. Your uncle Chad likes the cake too, but mom always just made it for me. I was obviously the favorite. [Coughs loudly and looks at grandma] You will have to help grandma make one for me and learn how so you can make me some all the time.

“Burnt Sugar Cake”

3 C Sugar

½ C Water

¾ C Butter

2 Eggs

3 C Flour

1 t. Baking soda

1 C cold water

1 T. Vanilla

1. Burn in heavy skillet on saucepan, sugar and water, Boil tell syrup produced.

2. Mix in a large bowl ½ C sugar and the butter, 2 eggs, and 3 cups flour that has been sifted 7 times, 1 tsp. of baking soda, and 1 C cold water.

3. Add ½ the flour & water to the creamed sugar & butter & eggs, beat well & add balance of flour, water, vanilla, & burnt syrup mixture ¼ C of syrup save for frosting. Beat well for 3 minutes.

4. Bake in 2- 9 or 10 in pans.

5. 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

6. Cool and frost with burnt sugar frosting.
Burnt Sugar Frosting Ingredients

½ C Sugar

½ C Milk

½ C Margarine

1. Cook in pan used to brown sugar
2. Cook to soft ball stage.
3. Cool to warm and beat as you do fudge.
4. Spread on cake.

Texture: As I interviewed her she was ecstatic you could see the glow in her eye as she talked about this cake. But she said everything in a way that exaggerated the fact that she wanted one so bad, it’s almost like she was just looking at my grandma the whole time instead of me! My grandma watched us from afar in the kitchen. During the interview I could hear my grandma say in the background, “We don’t have all the ingredients for it!” and you could almost feel the sadness that came over my mom, it was quite funny for me though to see this side of her with her mom begging for her favorite cake, at least it was funny until she told me that I needed to learn how to make it so I could make it all the time for her. Judging from her excitement it’s safe to say the burnt sugar cake recipe will never die off in our family and that my mom will be forever grateful to that forest ranger’s wife who gave my grandma the recipe!

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