

Sticky Toffee Pudding

(who doesn't like Sticky Toffee Pudding?)



By Neil McCready

SERVES 4-6

INGREDIENTS

For the date puree/mash....

170g stoned, dried dates
5g/teaspoon Bi-carb of soda
Enough cold water to cover

And the rest.....

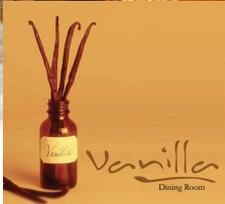
55g butter (& extra to grease your tin)
17g caster sugar
255g self-raising flour (sieved)
5g/teaspoon baking powder
1 large egg, beaten

For the toffee sauce....

300ml double cream
100g muscavado sugar
100g soft Demerara sugar
75g butter, sliced
1 drop vanilla extract (optional)

Equipment

Grease proof paper
A small loaf tin or 10" standard spring form tin.
Food mixer with a paddle attachment or if doing by hand a large mixing bowl & rubber spatula.
Masher/food processor/liquidiser.



METHOD

1. First, in a small saucepan place the dates, water & bi-carb and bring to the boil and then reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for another 10 minutes. (If the water is drying out just add a little more so that the water is just barely covering the dates). Remove from the heat and either mash or blitz the dates to a rough puree (water 'n' all) leave in the pan to cool slightly but not completely.
2. Pre-heat your oven to Gas 3/190°
3. Now grease your tin with melted butter using clean fingers or a pastry brush and then quickly push enough greaseproof paper in to line the tin, the butter will anchor the paper in shape, place in the fridge for 5-10mins to re-set the butter.
4. In a food mixer or by hand, cream the butter & sugar together until pale and fluffy, then beat in the egg until incorporated. Add a 1/3 of the flour to the mix with a 1/3 of the date mash/puree and repeat this twice more until all the flour and all the date mash/puree is incorporated into the mix. Finally add the baking powder and pour the mixture into your tin, it should come 1/2 way to 3/4 up the tin but don't worry, it will rise during cooking. Place the tin, uncovered in the middle of your pre-heated oven for 35-40mins or until a skewer or spoon handle comes out clean when poked in the middle of the cake.
5. While your cake is cooking make the sauce, place the sugar(s), cream & vanilla into a wide saucepan and cook on a medium to high heat, whisking often to help the sugar(s) dissolve into the cream. Once the sugar(s) are dissolved and the sauce is smooth remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the butter a piece at a time until all is gone and you have a glossy sauce. (Don't be tempted to whisk in anymore at one time as sauce cannot incorporate to much fat at once and will turn greasy)
6. Remove the cake when cooked and either serve immediately with the sauce and maybe some custard, ice-cream or just the sauce alone. The cake will keep up to 10 days in an airtight container and the sauce will keep for up to 2 weeks in the fridge. When re-heating simply scoop a spoonful of cold sauce (which will now resemble fudge) on top of a slice of the pudding and heat in the micro wave for 50-60 seconds, that's all it needs and it will taste as fresh as when it came out of the oven, enjoy!