



Sticky Toffee Pudding



Sticky Toffee Pudding

Start to finish: 1½ hours (30 minutes active), plus cooling

Servings: 10

To update Britain's sticky toffee pudding—a steamed, too-often bland dessert hidden under a gluey, cloying syrup—we worked backward, starting with the sauce. Instead of the traditional butter-based hard sauce, we spiked the toffee glaze with rye whiskey. The whiskey's spice and heat cut through the sweetness of the dark brown sugar and corn syrup; orange zest added brightness. For the cake itself, we wanted to mirror the flavor of the rye, so we used a blend of rye and all-purpose flours. Dates that are steeped in coffee, then pureed, gave body and an earthiness that boosted the rye flavor. Together, the nutty rye and bitter coffee balanced the cake's sweetness. To improve the dessert's presentation, we made it in a Bundt pan. Covering the pan with foil kept the cake rich and moist, similar to a traditional steamed pudding. This mimicked the gentle heat of steaming in a water bath (bain marie) but was far less fussy.

For the cake:

12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) salted butter, melted and cooled slightly, plus more for pan

130 grams (1 cup) all-purpose flour, plus more for pan

8 ounces pitted dates (about 1½ cups)

1 cup brewed coffee

105 grams (¾ cup) rye flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon baking soda

199 grams (1 cup packed) dark brown sugar

4 large eggs

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 teaspoon ground allspice

For the toffee sauce:

199 grams (1 cup packed) dark brown sugar

⅔ cup light corn syrup

2 teaspoons finely grated orange zest

⅛ teaspoon kosher salt

6 tablespoons rye whiskey

8 tablespoons (1 stick) salted butter, cut into 8 pieces and chilled



For the cake:

Heat the oven to 325°F with a rack in the middle position. Lightly coat a 12-cup nonstick Bundt pan with melted butter, then dust evenly with flour and tap out the excess. In a medium saucepan over medium-high, bring the dates and coffee to a boil. Remove from the heat and let stand for 15 minutes. In a large bowl, whisk together both flours, the baking powder, salt and baking soda.

Transfer the coffee-date mixture to a food processor, add the sugar and process until smooth, about 1 minute. Add the eggs, vanilla and allspice. Then, with the processor running, add the butter. Pour the date mixture over the flour mixture and whisk gently until thoroughly combined. Transfer to the prepared pan, cover tightly with foil and bake until firm and a toothpick inserted at the center comes out clean, 55 to 65 minutes. Remove the foil and cool in the pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes.

For the sauce:

While the cake cools, in a medium saucepan over medium-high, combine the sugar, corn syrup, orange zest and salt. Bring to a boil, then cook until the mixture reaches 240°F, 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce to low and add the whiskey, 2 tablespoons at a time, allowing the bubbling to subside before adding more. Whisk in the butter 2 tablespoons at a time until melted and smooth.

Invert the cake onto a serving platter and lift off the pan. Brush the top and sides of the cake generously with warm toffee sauce. Slice and serve drizzled with additional sauce. The sauced, cooled cake can be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap and kept at room temperature for up to 3 days. Cooled sauce can be refrigerated for up to 1 week. To reheat, wrap the cake in foil and place in a 300°F oven until warmed. Microwave the sauce until bubbling.