

Pear and Ginger Loaf With Crunchy Almond Topping

You will need a loaf tin approx. 21cm x 11cm

Set your oven at 180°C

Ingredients for the Nut Cake:

3 - 4 small ripe pears (if large or unripe see instructions below)
3 eggs
4 heaped teaspoons ground ginger or 6 heaped teaspoons freshly grated ginger
½ cup/80mls extra virgin olive oil
½ cup/75g sugar, see note below
50g oat flour or buckwheat flour
250g ground nuts/seeds, such as raw almonds and sesame seeds

For the Crunchy Topping:

1 handful raw almonds, roughly chopped
1 tsp honey
1 tsp extra virgin olive oil

How To Make:

Set your oven to 180c.

In a large bowl, mix together the eggs, ginger, oil and sugar.

Add the flour and ground nuts, mix together well to form a batter.

If your pears are really ripe or particularly small then peel each pear, leaving the stalks on; Cut a thin section off at the base of each pear so they will stand upright in the cake tin. (If your pears are not ripe or are large then follow the instructions below for pre-cooking them).

Line a loaf tin with baking paper and put a thin layer of cake mixture into the base.

Then place the pears, standing upright, onto this layer.

Pour the remaining cake batter around the pears.

Mix the chopped almonds with 1 teaspoon honey and 1 teaspoon oil, then scatter over the top of the cake mix.

Pop the cake into the oven for 30 minutes until cooked. Use a cake skewer to check it is cooked in the center, then leave to cool in the tin before cutting.

If your pears aren't very ripe or are quite large then pre cook them before adding to the cake batter.

You can cook them 2 ways, either by poaching them or roasting them.

If I'm doing this I like to do a few extra, that way I have some to use on top of porridge in the morning or as a dessert - Delicious!

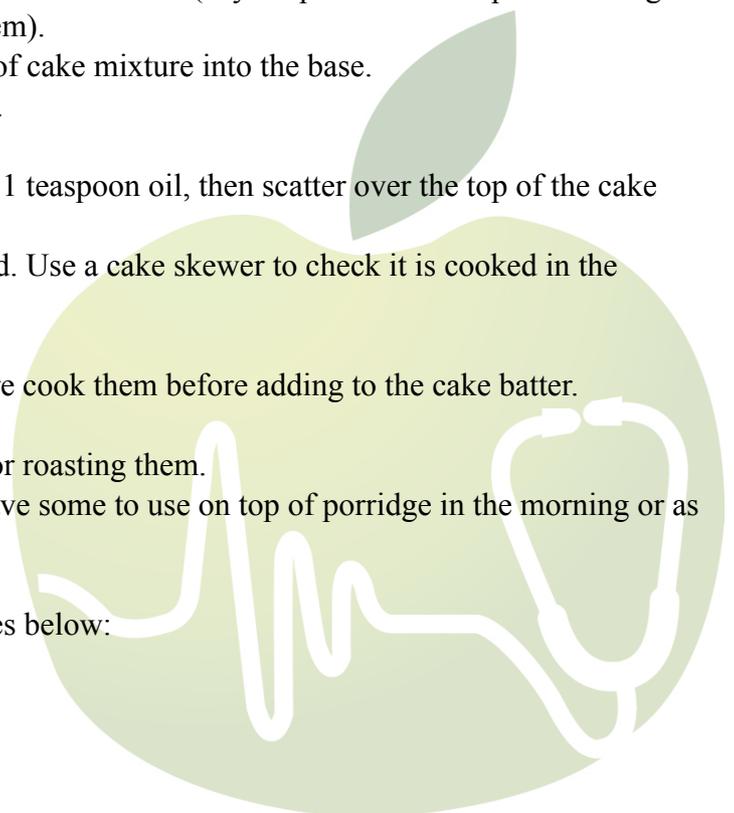
Both ways to cook the pears work well, see the choices below:

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Ingredients For Poaching The Pears:

3 ripe Beurre Bosc/Conference pears (more pears if you wish)
1 cinnamon quill
8 cardamon pods, crushed
3 whole dried star anise
4 whole cloves
Honey or sugar, to sweeten the water slightly

To Poach The Pears:

Peel the pears, leaving the stalks on, but cutting a thin slice from the bottoms so the pears stand up right on their own.

Pop all the pears into a large saucepan and fill with water so the water is only just covering the pears.

Add the spices, honey/sugar to the water and bring to the boil, then turn down to a low simmer.

Cook the pears for a further 15 minutes, depending on how ripe they are, then turn off the heat and, if you have time, leave the pears to cool in the spiced water. If the pears are quite ripe already then they will need less cooking time, eg 5 minutes of simmering once they have come to the boil.

The aim is to cook the pears so they are soft but not falling apart; If in doubt under rather than over cook them.

Alternatively you can cook the pears by roasting them, see below.

If you wish to roast the pears instead of poaching them:

Ingredients For Roasting The Pears:

3 ripe Beurre Bosc/Conference pears (more pears if you wish)
1 tsp honey
1 tsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tsp mixed spices
1 tsp ground ginger

How To Roast The Pears:

Peel the pears, leaving the stalk on the top.

Cut off a thin section of pear flesh at the base of each pear so that they stand upright on a tray.

Rub the oil, honey and spices over the pears.

Place the pears onto a baking tray and lightly cover with tin foil, then roast in an oven set at 180c for about 30 minutes or until softened but not falling apart.

Allow to cool out of the oven whilst you prepare the cake mixture.

Note:

I've reduced down the sugar to only just enough so on your tongue the cake tastes sweet enough for the taste buds to communicate to your brain that you're having something sweet to eat, but in fact this amount works out at approx. 7.5g sugar per portion, really low for a piece of cake, so if it is too low for you then add some more.

