

Swedish Almond Cake

By Dorie Greenspan

YIELD 8 servings

TIME 1 1/4 hours, plus cooling

Fika is the Swedish custom of stopping twice daily for coffee, conversation and a little something sweet; the word was created by flipping the two syllables in kaffe. Minutes after I had a fika in the Stockholm studio of the pastry chef Mia Ohrn, I started thinking about what I'd serve at my own first fika. This cake, so much easier to make than you'd guess by looking at it, has become my favorite. The recipe turns out a moist, buttery, tender cake, which would be lovely as is. But when the cake is half-baked, I cook a mixture of butter, sugar, flour and sliced almonds, spread it over the top (a homage to Sweden's famous toska cake), put the pan back in the oven and wait for the mixture to bubble, caramelize and create a shell that is a little chewy, a little crackly and very beautiful. It's a perfect cake for fika, and great for brunch.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CAKE:

**1/2 cup plus 6
tablespoons/200 grams
unsalted butter, melted
and lukewarm, plus**

PREPARATION

Step 1

Make the cake: Center a rack in the oven, and heat it to 350 degrees. Butter a 9-inch springform pan (using solid, unmelted butter), and dust the interior with flour; tap out the excess. Place the pan on a baking

**more unmelted butter
for greasing the pan**

**2 cups minus 2
tablespoons/240 grams
all-purpose flour, plus
more for dusting the
pan**

**1 teaspoon baking
powder**

**¼ teaspoon fine sea
salt**

**1 ¼ cups/250 grams
granulated sugar**

**2 large eggs, at room
temperature**

**⅔ cup/160 milliliters
whole milk, lukewarm**

**2 teaspoons vanilla
extract**

FOR THE TOPPING:

**7 tablespoons/100
grams unsalted butter,
cut into small chunks**

**¾ cup/75 grams sliced
almonds**

**½ cup/100 grams
granulated sugar**

**2 tablespoons all-
purpose flour**

sheet lined with parchment paper or a
silicone baking mat.

Step 2

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour,
baking powder and salt.

Step 3

Working with a mixer (use a paddle
attachment, if you have one), beat the sugar
and eggs together on medium-high speed
until the mixture is light and slightly
thickened, about 3 minutes. Reduce the
speed to medium, and gradually add the
melted butter, followed by the milk and
vanilla. (I like to pour the ingredients down
the side of the bowl as the mixer is
working.) Mix until the batter is smooth; it
will have a lovely sheen. Decrease the speed
to low, and gradually add the dry
ingredients. When the flour mixture is
almost fully incorporated, finish blending by
stirring with a spatula. Scrape the batter
into the prepared pan.

Step 4

Slide the cake into the oven, and set your
timer for 30 minutes.

Step 5

As soon as the timer dings, start the topping
(leaving the cake in the oven): In a medium
saucepan, mix together all the topping
ingredients. Place over medium-high heat

2 tablespoons whole milk

and, stirring constantly, cook until you see a couple of bubbles around the edges. Lower the heat to medium, and cook, stirring nonstop, for 3 minutes. The mixture will thicken a little, and your spatula will leave tracks as you stir. Remove the pan from the heat.

Step 6

Immediately take the cake out of the oven (leaving the oven on), and carefully pour the topping over the cake, nudging it gently with a spatula to cover the cake completely.

Step 7

Return the cake to the oven, and bake for an additional 15 minutes (total baking time is about 50 minutes) or until the topping, which will bubble and seethe, is a beautiful golden brown and a tester inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Transfer the baking sheet to a rack, and cool for 5 minutes. Carefully work a table knife between the side of the pan and the cake, gently pushing the cake away from the side (it's a delicate job because the sticky topping isn't yet set). Remove the sides of the pan, and let the cake come to room temperature on the base. When you're ready to serve, lift the cake off the springform base and onto a platter.