

Granny Smith Apple Cake With Caramel Pecan Sauce

1/2 pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 cup sugar

2 large eggs, at room temperature

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg - or to taste

2 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 teaspoon salt

3 medium-size tart apples (about 1 1/4 pounds), peeled, cored & finely chopped, (you can do this in a food processor by pulsating)

(Add 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice and toss)

3/4 cup chopped pecans halves (about 3 ounces)

(Toast in 350 oven for 5-7 minutes)

(remove excess dust by sifting nuts in a fine strainer)

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 quart very good quality vanilla ice cream, for serving

Caramel Pecan Sauce

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/2 cup pecan halves, or coarsely chopped

1 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar

1 cup heavy cream

Baking pan: 10" x 2"

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease cake pan, line with parchment paper and set aside

Beat butter and sugar in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 10 minutes.

Scrape down bowl with a rubber spatula.

Beat in eggs on low speed, one at a time, until well blended.

Scrape down bowl again.

Add flour, spices, baking soda and salt, beating just until incorporated.

Mix in apples, nuts and the vanilla.

Spoon batter into prepared pan.

Bake in the 350 degree oven for 35 to 45 minutes or until top is golden and cake tester inserted near center comes out clean. Remove to rack to cool.

Turn cake out of pan by inverting onto rack after 10 minutes.

If desired, the cake may be stored at room temperature, well wrapped, overnight, or it may be frozen.

Defrost at room temperature for several hours or overnight.

When ready to serve, reheat in 350 degree oven for 10 minutes or until warm - or pop in microwave for 1 minute a piece at a time. (single serving)

Caramel Pecan Sauce

Melt butter in medium saucepan. Add nuts. Cook, stirring constantly, over moderately high heat, until nuts are toasted and butter is lightly browned.

Add brown sugar and cream and continue to cook, stirring constantly, until sauce boils and sugar dissolves and turns deep golden brown. Remove from heat. Sauce will thicken slightly as it cools.

The sauce may be refrigerated for a week. Reheat before serving.

To serve, place a wedge of warm cake on dessert plate. Serve with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and spoon hot Caramel Pecan Sauce over all.