

Pear Upside Down Gingerbread Cake

<http://userealbutter.com/2013/11/07/pear-upside-down-gingerbread-cake-recipe/>
slightly modified from [Gourmet](#)

topping

2 1/2 to 4 firm pears, they recommend Bosc pears
1/4 cup unsalted butter
3/4 cup light brown sugar, packed

cake

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground ginger
1/2 tsp ground cloves
1/4 tsp salt
1 cup molasses
1 cup boiling water
1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed
1 large egg
1/4 cup candied ginger, small dice

Preheat oven to 350°F. The original recipe calls for a 10-inch well-seasoned cast iron skillet. If you have one of those, use 2 1/2 pears. I have a 12-inch cast iron skillet, so I increased the fruit to 4 pears which worked perfectly for the volume. Plus, I prefer a higher fruit to cake ratio.

Make the topping: Peel, core, and section each pear into 8 wedges (let the core be the axis of symmetry). Melt the butter in the skillet over medium heat until it stops foaming. Sprinkle the brown sugar over the butter and let it cook for 3 minutes without touching it. I left mine on medium heat, but I was supposed to reduce it to low. Seemed to work just fine. The sugar didn't melt too much. Arrange the pears over the brown sugar-butter mixture in a nice pattern (remember, this is going to be the top of the cake). Let the pears cook for 2 minutes then remove from heat.

Make the cake: Whisk the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ground ginger, cloves, and salt together in a medium bowl. Whisk the molasses and boiling water together in a separate bowl. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the 1/2 cup of light brown sugar and 1/2 cup of butter together until creamed (about 2 minutes). Beat in the egg until incorporated. Alternate adding a third of the flour mixture and a third of the molasses mixture, beating on low speed until smooth. Pour the batter over the pears in the skillet, carefully spreading the batter out. If you are using a 12-inch skillet, it will barely cover everything – don't worry, it will expand. I recommend placing a sheet of foil on a rack underneath the rack where you place your skillet because sugar

bubbled over the edge of my pan and burned on the oven. Bake the cake for 40-50 minutes until a toothpick in the center comes out clean (for the 12-inch skillet, mine baked in 35 minutes because it's more shallow). Cool the cake in the skillet for 5 minutes and loosen the edges with a knife before carefully inverting the cake onto a serving plate (wear oven mitts, please). To invert the cake, I recommend finding a plate that fits the skillet well, placing it upside down over the skillet and holding the two tightly together, flipping the entire ensemble upside down. Fill any missing pieces on the cake with whatever stuck to the pan. Serve warm or at room temperature. Serves 8.