

Figgy Pudding

One package of dried figs (10 to 12 ounces). Put them in a saucepan with enough hot water to cover- at least 2 cups. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat. Let sit until soft (a few hours).

Once soft, remove figs from the water and place in a bowl. Save the water, which will already be fragrant, and add a cup of sugar (optional). Bring to a boil and let reduce slightly. Remove from heat. Cool.

Chop up your figs. Chop them fine, but do not pulverize. Do this by hand.



Using a boxed cake mix for carrot cake, follow the directions, but instead of the water they request, use the fragrant sugary water from the figs. (Save the remainder of this water.) Then add oil and eggs as recommended on the carrot cake mix. Add some cinnamon (about 1/2 teaspoon) and a lot of fresh-grated nutmeg (about 1/4 teaspoon). Mix in a food processor. At the end, toss in the fig pieces and beat in a bit. Turn into a bowl and add a bunch of sliced almonds (about 1/2 cup) and some raisins (about 1/3 cup) that have been softened in brandy if you like. Add the grated peel of one orange and a big dollop (1 tablespoon) of marmalade.

Line a big metal bowl (about 4 quarts) with foil. Use enough foil that you will have a big collar around the top of the bowl. Spray the foil with nonstick spray. Pour your cake batter into the foil-lined bowl. Set into preheated 350° oven for 30 minutes, then bring the collar gently over top of cake. Continue for another hour and half. Use a skewer to test (it will come out clean when pudding is done). It will take a while because it is dense.

Remove from oven and cool overnight.

Uncover and overturn onto a big serving platter. Carefully remove foil. The cake will be a mound, its size depending on the depth of your bowl.

To serve, take the reserved fig-and-sugar syrup and add to the above. Heat. Use whipped cream or crème fraîche with each serving. (If your cake is less than perfect to the eye, you can instead quickly frost the cold cake with whipped cream, covering any imperfections, and serve the warm sauce on the side.)

Enjoy!

Recipe courtesy of **Laura Kalpakian** as it appeared in *Good Housekeeping*, December 2004