

pineapple upside down cake

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Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

Butter and brown sugar in the bottom of the tin, fruit arranged on it, batter poured over, and the whole thing inverted after baking so the caramelised fruit becomes the top. Skillet upside-down cakes are much older, but the pineapple version is precisely dateable: Dole ran a recipe contest in 1925 after canned pineapple rings became cheap, and received 2,500 entries for essentially this cake.

What makes it work

- **The topping is a caramel, made in the tin.** Melted butter and brown sugar, stirred to a paste and spread in the base. It liquefies, cooks with the fruit juice, and sets as a glaze on cooling.
- **Blot the fruit dry.** Canned rings carry a great deal of syrup, and that syrup thins the caramel into a runny layer that soaks the cake.
- **A firm, close-crumbed batter.** This cake carries a wet topping; a light airy batter goes soggy. Sour cream or buttermilk and a modest rise.
- **Invert after five minutes, not later.** The caramel sets hard as it cools and welds fruit to metal.
- **Cast iron is the traditional pan** and the best one — it holds heat and caramelises the base evenly. See [baking equipment](#).

Ingredients

One 25 cm cast-iron skillet or round tin. Serves 10.

Topping:

- 85 g unsalted butter
- 200 g dark brown sugar
- 7–8 pineapple rings, blotted dry
- 10 glacé or fresh cherries — see [Cherry](#)
- 2 g fine salt

Cake:

- 170 g unsalted butter, softened
- 200 g granulated sugar
- 3 [eggs](#)
- 250 g all-purpose flour
- 8 g baking powder
- 3 g fine salt
- 120 ml buttermilk — see [buttermilk recipes](#)
- 2 tsp vanilla — see [Pure vanilla extract](#)

Method

Heat the oven to **175 °C / 350 °F**.

Melt the 85 g of butter in the skillet, stir in the brown sugar and salt, and spread it evenly over the base. Take it off the heat. Lay the pineapple rings on the sugar and put a cherry in each hole.

Cream the butter and sugar three minutes, beat in the eggs one at a time, then the vanilla. Alternate the flour, baking powder and salt with the buttermilk.

Spoon the batter over the fruit — dollop it and spread gently so the rings do not shift — and level.

Bake **40–45 minutes**, until a skewer comes out clean.

Cool exactly five minutes. Run a knife round the edge, put a plate over the pan, and invert in one movement. Leave the pan in place a minute so the caramel runs down.

Notes

- **Fresh pineapple** works and tastes better; slice it 1 cm thick and cook the rings in the caramel for three minutes before adding the batter, because it carries more water.
- Plums, apricots, pears, cranberries and rhubarb all take the same treatment — see [plums](#), [Apricot](#), [pears](#) and [Rhubarb](#).
- **Eats best warm on the day.** Reheat slices 20 seconds in a microwave.

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