



Elderflower and Lemon Drizzle Cake

Elderflowers are for many the smell and taste of Summer. They are out for a relatively short window of time in the year and there are many delicious things you can make with them. Here we show how to make an Elderflower and Lemon Drizzle Cake.

Overview

The process is fairly simple: you make a cake batter (with lemon zest in it), put it in your cake tin or cupcake cases and bake the cake. Then you'll make an elderflower and lemon syrup by squeezing out the lemon juice, adding the elderflowers to it and a little sugar or honey and heating this on a low heat until the colour has gone from the elderflowers. You then strain the elderflowers out, poke holes in your freshly baked cakes with a cocktail stick and pour the syrup into the cake. This is the best way we've found to bring out the elderflower flavour.

Duration

1-1.5 hours

How To

First light a cooking fire to create a good ember bed for cooking your cake on. Some woods make hotter and longer lasting embers than others. Birch and oak as a mixture can be excellent to prepare embers for cooking on.

Gathering the Elderflowers

- Positively identify an elder tree in abundant blossom, share anything you know about the tree as a group before picking some flower heads.
- Be careful not to pull the branches down too strongly when gathering as they can be a bit brittle and snap.
- Consider how you can reciprocate and offer something back to the Elder tree(s), perhaps through gifting a song, an offering of barley or oats with gratitude or even making a commitment to take cuttings from the elder in the Autumn or Winter and plant them to support the local elder population to thrive.

Making the Cake

- Place the dutch oven near the fire to start warming the cast iron.
- Mix the dry ingredients (2 cups of self raising flour and 1 cup of sugar).
- Add the wet ingredients and mix: ½ cup of butter, 1 cup of water, 2 eggs, a teaspoon of vanilla essence if you wish.

Disclaimer: The advice in this guide is considered to be correct at the time of writing, but Red Squirrel Resources accept no liability for actions inspired by these resources.

- Add the lemon zest and mix
- Pour or spoon into your cake tin or cup cake cases. If making cupcakes on an open fire in a dutch oven, we recommend putting these in a cake tin to support and contain them, you could also use two cases per cupcake to help them keep their shape.
- Place the cake(s) in the dutch oven and put this on a trivet about 4 inches above the embers (depending on their heat). If you still have a hearty fire going, it can be helpful to move some embers to one side of it to cook over and use the rest of the fire as a feeder fire to top up the embers and keep them hot.
- Cover the lid of the dutch oven in embers also (either with the chop stick method or with a shovel / spade / trowel).
- Tips for cooking the cake over the fire:
 - Avoid flames under the dutch oven as this can cause the base of the cake to burn
 - Do not put the dutch oven directly on the embers as this can cause the cake to burn
 - If you get the heat just right we find a large cake takes around 45 minutes to cook and muffins take around 25 minutes to cook.
 - Listen to your gut instinct, use your sense of smell to avoid the cake burning and to know when it might be cooked, and use a clock to check the cake at reasonable intervals. You can carefully take the embers off of the dutch oven lid and use a fire glove to remove the lid and poke a clean knife or cocktail stick into the centre of the cake to see if it is cooked through - if so there shouldn't be sticky batter on the cocktail stick or knife.

Making the Elderflower and Lemon Syrup

- Squeeze the juice of 3-4 lemons and put this into the pot
- Add the elderflowers by teasing them off their flowerheads into the juice. Avoid adding any significant stalks as these taste unpleasant and are mildly toxic when raw.
- Add a spoonful of sugar or honey
- Put the pot over the fire, stirring it every now and then over a low heat. Keep an eye on the fluid level as you don't want this to get too low - if it does get low you can add a dash of water or more lemon juice.
- After around 10-15 minutes the colour of the elderflowers will have changed from that bright, creamy white to a duller colour. This signifies that the flavour and goodness has gone from the flowers into the syrup and you can strain it through a sieve.
- Do a taste check and then this is ready.

Putting the Syrup and Cake Together

- Once the cake and syrup are both ready, place your cake(s) on a plate or board and poke holes into them with a cocktail stick
- Slowly spoon on the syrup, helping it find its way into the cake
- Decorate the cakes with elderflowers
- They're now ready to share and enjoy!

Equipment Needed

Cake Ingredients:

- 2 cups Self raising flour
- 1 cup Sugar
- 1 cup water
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup oil or butter
- Zest of 3-4 lemons
- Teaspoon of vanilla essence (optional)

To mix and cook the cake on an open fire:

- Lemon zester
- Bowl (2 is helpful)
- Measuring cup
- Spoon
- Fork
- Spatula
- Trivet
- Dutch oven
- Cake tin
- Cupcake cases optional

Syrup Ingredients:

- Juice of 3-4 lemons
- Freshly gathered elderflowers (5-10 heads of flowers for a cake)
- A tablespoon of sugar or honey

For the syrup:

- Lemon squeezer
- Pot
- Spoon
- Trivet
- Jug
- Sieve
- Fire gloves
- Cocktail stick

Variations

If you have two shallow cake tins and you're making small muffins or cupcakes you can find ways to create a double layer within your dutch oven. This is worth testing out when all the equipment is cool to avoid any accidents.

You can use a tripod to suspend the dutch oven instead of a trivet - just watch out for the tripod legs around the fire as a trip hazard.

Once confident with cooking cakes over the fire in this way you can of course vary the flavour to whatever you fancy. Along this theme you could vary the syrup adding orange juice or rose petals if you wish...

Invisible Learning

- Appreciation for the gifts of the Elder
- Cooking skills
- Development of fire skills for cooking
- Measuring quantities

Hazards to Highlight

Managing the hot metal is the key hazard in terms of accidents and potential burns. It is usually evident to all that they are very hot whilst on the fire, but in the process of getting the cake out

Disclaimer: The advice in this guide is considered to be correct at the time of writing, but Red Squirrel Resources accept no liability for actions inspired by these resources.

of the dutch oven, this can be left in an unsuitable place where people can forget it is hot and go to pick it up without fire gloves to move it. Equally the trivet, once removed is a hot metal hazard and this can be vastly reduced by pouring cold water on it.

Misidentification of elderflowers. We have made an elderflower look alike video that is linked to this below. There are other white umbels of flowers out at the same time of year as elderflowers, some of which are toxic.

Risk Assessment Considerations

These are the risk assessment consideration documents to be referred to for this activity.

- Site risk assessment (specific to your site)
- Fire Activities
- Plant Based Activities

Links

- Elderflower Look Alikes
- Elderflower Cordial
- Elder Story
- Elderflower Fritters
- Planting Elder Rods (coming later in 2022)
- Elder Pots (coming later in 2022)

Tags

- Elderflower, cake, fire, cooking, dutch oven

