

Apple Dumplings With Caramel Sauce

This is my mother's recipe; I made it my own by adding dark and rich not-too-sweet caramel sauce.

Dough Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups unbleached all purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup shortening (Crisco or lard—I prefer lard)
- ½ cup milk (just enough to bring dough together)

Filling Ingredients

- Four large apples (I prefer Granny Smith), peeled and sliced
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon (to taste)

Simple Syrup Ingredients

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar

Caramel Sauce Ingredients

- ¼ cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

Apple Dumpling Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Mix first four dough ingredients in the bowl of a food processor or electric mixer. Add milk, a little at a time, just until a soft dough forms. Don't over mix because that will make the dough tough instead of tender. Divide into 4 equal parts and roll each portion in a circle about 1/8 inch thick.
3. In a large bowl, toss apple slices and cinnamon until the apples are evenly coated.
4. Evenly divide the apples among the dough rounds. Place 1 tablespoon of butter on top of each portion of apples. Fold dough around the apples and place in individual baking dishes, or you can put all of them in a single baking dish.
5. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes, just until the dough begins to brown around the edges.
6. Meanwhile, in a small sauce pan, mix 1 cup water and 1 cup sugar and bring to a boil. (This is *simple syrup*.) Pour the simple syrup on top of each dumpling, dividing it evenly among them.
7. Lower the oven to 350 degrees and bake 45 minutes longer.
8. Serve warm with Caramel Sauce (instructions below). You can also top with vanilla ice cream.

Caramel Sauce Instructions

1. Combine ¼ cup water and the sugar in a small saucepan. Heat over medium heat stirring very gently until the sugar completely dissolves.
2. Increase the heat to high, cover the saucepan, and boil for two minutes.
3. Remove the lid and continue to boil until the syrup turns deep amber (this takes around 10 minutes).
4. Remove the pan from the heat, STAND BACK, and carefully pour 1/3 cup water into the pan. THIS REALLY SPLATTERS! Stir until smooth.
5. Add the vanilla and salt.
6. Serve immediately over the Apple Dumplings, or allow it to cool slightly.

Note: The Caramel Sauce can be refrigerated for up to six months. Reheat over low heat, or in a microwave, before using. It's also excellent on vanilla ice cream!