

SHIRLEY'S RED HAT CAKE

Cherry Streusel Coffee Cake

courtesy of Shirley Jackson
and Cleo Coyle

Photos © by Alice Alfonsi who writes
The Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle

Note from Shirley Jackson: "I made this coffeecake for the first time at Pam's home in Houston for a group of Red Hat friends. This coffeecake taste just like a yeast bread that has taken you a long time to make. Sure does make your kitchen smell cozy."

Note from Cleo Coyle: Shirley is absolutely right -- about the yeast and the coziness of this coffee cake. Over the years, I've seen many cake recipes with a cake mix as starter. I've seen many "pie-filling over cake mix recipes," too. But I've never seen yeast used as an ingredient. The use of yeast in this recipe gives the streusel a sweet bread-like flavor and texture -- but without kneading or rising time. This cake is delicious with coffee in the morning, as a dessert, and it's also fantastic chilled, so it's a great cake for summer. Thank you, Shirley!

Ingredients:

- 1 package yellow cake mix
- 1 packet (1/4 ounce) dry yeast
- 1 cup all-purpose flour, unsifted
- 2 eggs
- 2/3 cup very warm tap water
- 5 Tablespoons butter (*salted is fine*)
- 1 can (1 pound 5 ounce) cherry pie filling
- 2 Tablespoons granulated sugar

Step 1 – Preheat oven and prep pan: First preheat your oven to 375 degrees F. Coat a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan with cooking spray (or grease and flour it to prevent sticking).

Step 2 - Make dough: In a large mixing bowl, measure out 1-1/2 cups of the dry cake mix. (You are reserving the remaining mix for the topping). Add the flour, dry yeast, and 2/3rds cup very warm tap water. Allow the yeast to bubble and come alive for a minute. Then add the eggs and beat 2 minutes at medium speed, scraping the bowl often. Dough will be thick. Using a rubber spatula or back of a spoon, spread it across the bottom of your coated baking pan.



Step 3 - Make streusel topping: Melt butter in a saucepan and pour it over the remaining cake mix. Mix the butter in well with the dry mix. The streusel topping should be lumpy and crumbly.

Step 4 - Assemble coffee cake: Spoon the cherry pie filling evenly across the top of the dough in the baking pan. Sprinkle sugar on top of the filling. Finally, using your fingers, crumble the topping over it all. (There is quite a bit of topping in this recipe. I decided to hold back some of mine so the redness of the cherries would really show through.)

Step 5 - Bake and glaze: Bake the coffee cake for 30 minutes in the preheated 375 degree F. oven. As it cools on a rack, make my glaze (below) and drizzle to finish before serving.

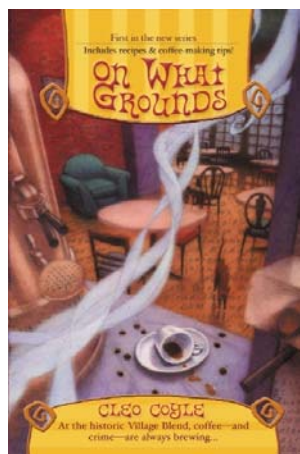


CLEO COYLE'S QUICK GLAZE:

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons butter (salted is fine)
- 2 Tablespoons whole milk (cream or half-and-half)
- 1 cup confectioner's (powdered or icing) sugar, sifted

Over medium heat, warm butter and milk in a saucepan. Do not let this mixture brown, burn, or boil or you will have a scalded taste in your glaze. As soon as butter has melted, stir in the sifted confectioner's sugar, a little at a time, until it is completely melted. You must work with the glaze quickly, while it is still warm. Using a rubber spatula or spoon, drizzle the warm glaze over the coffee cake. If the glaze hardens up on you, place the saucepan over the heat again and whisk until liquefied and smooth again.



Eat with Joy!

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