



Window in the Woods

AUTUMN - BIG BEAR LAKE, CA



Autumn-yellow leaves dapple the scene like Kusama style polka dots, as dry brush stroke grasses sway in the crisp breeze here at 6,752 feet above sea level. The A-shaped roofline of the cabin my father built wedges into frame as I snap my first photo of fall. Dad and my Uncle Bob started work on it when I was two, and nailed the last board into place the year I turned 16. Fourteen years of weekends were spent hammering and sawing through the 1950s, 60s and 70s before their dream of a midcentury mountain retreat was fully realized. Now I work on it. Or, more often just marvel at what they did.



As kids, we'd roost up in the loft, side-by-side in our sleeping bags, watching the night sky through the pyramid shaped window that pointed straight to the stars. The tall pines were silhouetted by the sparkle of galaxies beyond. My parents are among that stardust now, winking at us. Out that same window, a generation later, I watch as autumn lays its leafy path to winter.

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Bolzano Apple Cake

Prepare to be bowled over by a slice of heaven known as the "Bolzano Apple Cake". With this easy recipe, the ultimate fall fruit is baked into what is best described as "a cross between a clafouti (tart) and a pancake". Its heritage rooted in the Alto Adige region of Italy, this apple "cake", with its regally golden crust, is a classic northern Italian peasant dessert.



Recipe from [ALEXANDRA'S KITCHEN](#)
Yield: 1 cake

Ingredients:

- 1 stick butter (4 oz), plus more for greasing pan
- 2 eggs
- 1 vanilla bean or 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 to 4 apples, Fuji or Honey Crisp (about 1¼ pounds or 3 cups peeled and sliced)
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup milk at room temperature
- powdered sugar

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Grease a nine-inch-circle pan with butter. Cut a circle of parchment paper to fit the bottom of the pan and place inside pan. Grease sides of pan and parchment round with butter.
2. Melt butter in small saucepan. Set aside. Beat together eggs and half of sugar in a bowl. Continue to beat while slowly adding remaining sugar until thick — it should form a ribbon when dropped from spoon.
3. Split vanilla bean in half lengthwise. Scrape seeds into the egg-sugar mixture and add pod to melted butter.
4. Peel apples and cut straight down around the core into four big chunks. Discard the core then slice the apple pieces thinly.
5. Remove vanilla pod from butter and discard. Whisk butter into the sugar-egg mixture. Add the salt and baking powder and whisk to combine. Whisk in the milk. Whisk in the flour.
6. Add the apples, and use a spatula to incorporate them, coating every piece with batter. Pour the batter into the prepared pan.
7. Bake for 55 to 60 minutes or until the cake pulls away slightly from the pan and is brown on top. Cool for at least 30 minutes, then cut into wedges sprinkling each with powdered sugar if desired.

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