

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (WI)

July 16, 2006

CHEFS AT PLAY Carol Skare The Cookery, Fish Creek *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

Carol Skare, co-owner of **The Cookery**, added Door County cherries to an upside-down cake recipe that has been in her family for years. The cake is made in a cast-iron skillet.

Why you created this combination: I was trying to think of something we haven't made at our restaurant, and I had actually thought of making a cherry upside-down cake this year because of all the fruits in Door County. I've done it with apples and rhubarb and everything else — even cranberries this last year.

How you created the recipe: The basic recipe is a family favorite that I've never made in the restaurant. The topping I had to adapt, but not the actual cake recipe.

At first I thought of using fresh/frozen cherries. But we sell the dried cherries here and we also use them in salads and offer them on cereal, so I thought it would be fun to do something with dried cherries. And people are always looking for recipes. . . .

For the topping, at first I made it just using the dried cherries, cooking them in butter and brown sugar as you do for upside-down cake topping. But I wasn't satisfied with the way it turned out.

We do a Danish (pastry) with rum-soaked raisins or dried cherries, and that gives them a lot of flavor. So for this dish I plumped them up with hot water and rum. I soaked them, then drained them. That worked better.

Your favorite cherry pairings: We have a very popular salad with dried cherries; it has Granny Smith apples, Gorgonzola cheese and a tarragon vinaigrette dressing.

One of the things that I really like with cherries is a cherry crisp we do. It's one of our No. 1 sellers. We also can our cherry pie filling and we make a cherry sauce for pancakes and French toast.

We also make our own cherry jam and a cherry chutney that we use in quite a few (dishes). And we do a walnut-crusted chicken breast, and we top that with a cherry glaze, which we make from a combination of our cherry jam and cherry chutney. We add white wine and chicken stock and top it off with a dollop of cream and serve it over rice pilaf.

You can also use cherries with pork, and I think cherries are good with turkey. We do a turkey, cream cheese and chutney sandwich and we put that on homemade granola bread.

Cherry tips: You need to keep in mind that the Montmorency cherry is a very tart cherry. A lot of people use too much sugar. I found that if you back off on the sugar a little bit, you get a better taste with the cherries.

Dishes cherries wouldn't work well in: I did a dried cherry beef stew once. It tasted good, but it didn't go over very well. Once the customers tried it they liked it, but most of them shied away from it. I put fresh basil, thyme, garlic and a beef stock in it.

Will you add this to your menu?

We do a dessert of the day, and I'll probably put it in the rotation.

Dried Tart Cherry and Walnut Upside-Down Cake

2 cups dried tart Door County cherries (Montmorency)

1 teaspoon rum flavoring

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ sticks) unsalted butter (divided)

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed dark brown sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup coarsely chopped walnuts

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar

2 large eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup well-shaken buttermilk

Whipped cream to garnish

For topping: In bowl, cover cherries with 2 cups very hot tap water and the rum flavoring and let stand 45 minutes. Drain and discard liquid, pressing gently on cherries. They should be plump and moist.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put oven rack in middle position.

Melt $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter in well-seasoned 9-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Tilt skillet to coat bottom and sides with butter and stir in brown sugar. Simmer, stirring, until sugar is dissolved, 1 to 2 minutes, then add cherries and walnuts evenly over butter mixture. Remove from heat and set aside.

To make cake: In small bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Set aside.

Beat together remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter and the granulated sugar in large bowl with electric mixer at high speed until light and fluffy.

Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Reduce speed to low and add flour mixture alternately in batches with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture and mixing until combined. Do not overmix.

To assemble: Heat reserved topping in the cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat until it starts to bubble, then spoon batter over topping and spread evenly.

Transfer skillet to preheated oven and bake until cake is golden brown and toothpick inserted into center comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes.

Remove from oven and cool about 1 minute, then run knife around edge of pan. Place serving plate over pan and flip pan over so cake drops onto serving plate. Cool completely on plate set on wire rack, about 1 hour.

Serve cake at room temperature garnished with whipped cream. Makes about 8 servings.

Note: This cake can be made in a 10-inch cast-iron skillet, but it will be thinner and the topping will not be as thick. Bake 20 to 25 minutes.

Copyright 2006, Journal Sentinel Inc. All rights reserved. (Note: This notice does not apply to those news items already copyrighted and received through wire services or other media.)

Copyright. All Rights Reserved.