

# Upside down cake gets thumbs up for flavor

## Decorative fruit topping keeps it moist

Traditional upside down cake is a homestyle dessert prepared by arranging fruit in the bottom of a pan, then spooning cake batter over the top before baking. As soon as the cake is removed from the oven and cooled, it is turned upside down so the moist sweet filling becomes the top of the dessert.

The fruit mixture and juice in the filling form a glaze with the other ingredients and keep the cake especially moist.

The first mention of upside down cake in print appeared in the 1830s, although culinary authorities suggest versions of the recipe have been around much longer.

According to food history books tracing the earliest cake crumbs of this tasty dessert, the very first upside down cakes were probably prepared by the early settlers. Called "skillet" cakes, these upside down

cakes or desserts were "baked" in covered skillets over the open fire since many homes did not have ovens.

**SUPPOSEDLY, THE** cooking technique used for making upside down cakes resembled the method for preparing main dish "cakes" — ground beef mixtures prepared in a skillet with a cornbread filling.

A simplified version of the traditional upside down dessert is Pineapple Upside Down Coffeecake. Since the recipe calls for refrigerated biscuits and just three other ingredients, you can enjoy the taste of upside down cake without all the work. This attractive coffeecake is a

perfect way to add warmth to a leisurely weekend breakfast or brunch.

To prepare this lovely coffeecake, pineapple slices and cherries are attractively arranged in the bottom of a cake pan, then covered with separate refrigerated biscuits. A heated brown sugar and pineapple juice mixture is then spooned over the bi-

scuits layer before baking.

This fruit-topped coffeecake is inverted before serving to show off the lovely pineapple pattern created by the pineapple slices and cherries. Pineapple Upside Down Coffee Cake is delightful served either warm or cold.

### PINEAPPLE UPSIDE DOWN COFFEECAKE

8 1/2 oz. can pineapple slices, well-drained and halved (reserve liquid)  
8 maraschino cherries  
1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar  
2 Tbsp. reserved pineapple liquid  
7.5 oz. can refrigerated buttermilk biscuits

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Arrange pineapple slices and cherries in ungreased 8- or 9-inch round pan. In small saucepan, heat brown sugar and pineapple liquid to boiling, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

Separate dough into 10 biscuits; place over pineapple slices. Pour brown sugar mixture over biscuits in pan. Bake at 375 degrees for 17 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 10 minutes in pan. Invert onto serving plate. Serve warm or cool, 8 servings.

**Tip:** To reheat, wrap loosely in foil; heat at 350 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes.

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**CHICKEN CORDON BLEU CASSEROLE**

1/4 cup milk  
1/4 cup dry white wine  
1 pkg. (8 1/2 ounces) white sauce mix  
1 lb. boneless chicken breasts, cut in bite-size pieces  
1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen chopped broccoli, thawed, drained  
2 cups (8 oz.) finely shredded Swiss cheese

1 cup diced ham  
1/4 cup cornflake crumbs  
2 red pepper rings and parsley for garnish

Combine milk, wine and sauce mix with whisk in a 1 1/2-quart microwaveable casserole. Add chicken pieces and stir to combine. Cover with plastic film and vent. Cook in microwave oven 8 to 9 1/2 minutes at HIGH, or until chicken is tender and sauce is thickened; stir twice during cooking time.

Carefully stir in drained broccoli, Swiss cheese and ham. Sprinkle cornflake crumbs evenly over the top. Cook in microwave oven 4 to 4 1/2 minutes at HIGH, or until thoroughly heated. Let stand covered 2 minutes. Garnish with red pepper rings. Season to taste. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

To cook conventionally, combine milk, wine and sauce mix with whisk in a medium frypan. Add chicken pieces and stir to combine. Cover and simmer about 14 minutes over medium heat, or until chicken is tender and sauce is thickened; stir occasionally. Remove from heat and stir in drained broccoli, Swiss cheese and ham. Pour chicken mixture into a 1 1/2-quart oven-proof casserole. Sprinkle cornflake crumbs evenly over the top. Bake uncovered 50 to 60 minutes at 350 degrees or until thoroughly heated. Garnish with red pepper rings and parsley.

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In France, cordon bleu was once the emblem of the highest order of knighthood, merited only by the finest in the kingdom. Later, the symbol was adopted as the Blue Ribbon of Gastronomy for dishes of the greatest distinction.

The first taste will tell you that Chicken Cordon Bleu is an entree deserving of its name and its fame. In the recipe's classic form, preparation was long and involved: chicken breasts were halved, split and boned; pockets were slit in each to fill with the finest of ham and cheese; all was then breaded and baked. It's no wonder that Chicken Cordon Bleu became a special-occasions-only entree.

Now the coveted blue ribbon is within reach of even the novice cook. Chicken Cordon Bleu Casserole, laced with wine and white sauce, studded with crisp broccoli, is distinctive in color, taste and texture. It goes together quickly, thanks to boneless chicken breasts (available in most supermarkets), white sauce mix, and frozen, chopped broccoli. And it cooks in minutes.

## Diet counts

Right now, scientists are not sure about the role eating habits play in cancer. Studies have shown that people who eat a lot of fatty foods and who do not eat much dietary fiber may be more likely to get cancer of the colon.

For more information, call the Cancer Information Service of Michigan, and ask for free booklet, "Cancer - What to Know, What to Do About It." Toll-free, 1-800-482-4959.