



# 1840 Farm

## APPLE CIDER RECIPE COLLECTION

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APPLE CIDER CONCENTRATE • BAKED APPLE CIDER DONUTS • APPLE CIDER DONUT MUFFINS • APPLE CIDER  
CARAMEL SAUCE • HOW TO MAKE BAKING PAN RELEASE SPREAD AND CAKE FLOUR SUBSTITUTE

# A NOTE ABOUT OUR RECIPES

The recipes we share have been made many times here at the farmhouse. In all cases, I have made them at least three times, adjusting them along the way if needed. Then I make them once or twice in their final form to make sure that the results are delicious and consistent.

My family members step in and make the final recipe to make sure that they are easy to understand and follow. Our Farmhouse Kitchen Recipe Testers are invited to make them and share their ideas and suggestions with us. Once they pass those tests, they are ready for you to give them a try.

We do our very best to ensure that there are no mistakes, omissions, or typos in our recipes. We're not perfect, so every once in a while, we miss something. We hope that you'll let us know if you find one so that we can make a correction and improve the recipe.

I believe that there's no "right" way to make a recipe, just my way and your way. I hope that you'll use our recipes as a guide to help you find your own unique way to make each one. Or, if you prefer, you can follow the recipe without making any changes.

Substitute ingredients to meet your dietary needs and preferences. Use the kitchen equipment you have on hand even if it differs greatly from what I use. Modify the instructions if it suits you or if you simply find an easier way to achieve the same result.

I hope that you'll tell me about the adjustments you make and how our recipes work for you in your kitchen. Your comments will help me to improve our recipes which makes it easier for other readers to create them successfully in their own kitchens.

I can't wait to hear what you think of this collection of recipes!

You might also enjoy the digital recipe booklets for these delicious recipes.

Click to view them on our blog.



1840 Farm

CREAMY ORZO WITH CHICKEN AND SPINACH



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PAN SEARED COD OR HALIBUT WITH LEMON BUTTER SAUCE

# RECIPE NOTES

I'm a tinkerer by nature. I am forever imagining ways that I can improve a recipe or remove unnecessary steps from the instructions. I'm also prone to deciding on a whim to adjust a recipe to fit the ingredients I happen to have on hand in the pantry and refrigerator.

My want to be nimble in the kitchen leads to me making notes on nearly any recipe I make no matter how many times I have made it. Perhaps I learned this from my grandmother who would make handwritten notes on recipes she clipped from the local newspaper. She would write, "tastes good", "looks beautiful", or "needed more time in the oven" on those recipes so that she could use her own notes as her guide the next time she made it.

I still have her recipes in the recipe box I made for her when I was about ten years old. There's something about her handwritten notes that make them feel like a bit like a time capsule of my childhood and part of the cultivation of my lifelong love of baking. I hope that my children will feel the same way about my handwritten recipe notes. I also hope that you'll make your own notes and make changes to my recipes to make them uniquely your own.

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# RECIPES IN THIS ISSUE



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We gathered together the tools we used in the Farmhouse Kitchen to create and test the recipes in this Apple Cider Recipe Collection [HERE](#) so that you can learn more about them. You can also find our favorite products for the pantry, garden, farmhouse, and studio. You'll even find a few of Penny Lane's favorites that you can share with your pup.

We only share the products we use and never suggest products we haven't tried ourselves. If you choose to make a purchase, we will receive a tiny commission at no extra cost to you. The pennies we earn help to cover the cost of running our blog and keep Penny Lane's cookie jar full of yummy treats.

You can learn more about our participation in affiliate programs and read our full disclosure statement [here](#).



Have questions about the recipes in this collection? Want to tell us what you think of a recipe or how you changed a recipe to make it your own?

Send us a [message](#) or post a comment on our [blog](#), [Facebook](#), or [Instagram](#).



There's something about the aroma and flavor of apple cider that transports me to a crisp Autumn day no matter what the weather is actually like outside. There are so many ways to enjoy it including the easiest: in the original form straight from the refrigerator served cold or warm with a dollop of whipped cream and a pinch of cinnamon.

As much as I love to drink apple cider, I really enjoy incorporating it into my recipes. The flavor goes so well with the other flavors of fall. It seems only natural to add it to the other seasonal recipes I make this time of year.

It started with an easy choice: Apple Cider Donuts. My family lives with food allergies, so we can't safely enjoy the apple cider donuts that abound at the fairs and festivals here in New England each fall. So, I decided to make a homemade version.

While I do fry donuts on occasion, I decided to try baking these instead. I've made many different types of baked donuts in the past and find them to be easy to make and so delicious.

The first batch of donuts were good, but not nearly as great as I had hoped. They were a lovely cinnamon sugar cake donut. They didn't taste at all of apple cider.

I knew that I needed a method to deepen the apple cider flavor. Around that time, I happened upon a cookie recipe from Jesse Szewczyk that incorporated red wine into a chocolate cookie. In order to prevent the red wine flavor from completely baking out, he made a concentrate to strengthen the flavor. I couldn't wait to give that a try.

Luckily, the transformation from tasty beverage to baking ingredients is a simple one. It only takes a bit of time on the stovetop. By simmering away some of the liquid in the cider, the natural flavors become concentrated and the flavors of the apple cider come to the forefront.

It was time to test my theory and see if the concentrate would make the apple cider donut I had been dreaming of. As soon as I took the first bite, I knew that these delicious donuts were going to be a seasonal favorite here at the farmhouse. As soon as the weather took a turn towards fall, I was boiling away a pot of apple cider on the stove to make a batch. They didn't disappoint.

Once you have a jar of this Apple Cider Concentrate on hand, you can incorporate the flavor of apple cider into your favorite sauces, caramels, and fall inspired baking recipes. Because the concentrate is more strongly flavored, it can be the belle of the ball and the delicious star of the dishes you cook and bake.

Obviously, I'd recommend baking a batch of apple cider donuts. However, if you don't have a donut pan for baking, or you simply prefer muffins to donuts, then the Apple Cider Donut Muffins are a perfect fit. The use the same batter as the donuts, but instead of saving all of the cinnamon sugar topping to coat them in, I add most of it directly to the batter before baking. The result is a tender muffin with the flavor of fall baked inside and added on top for that delicate cinnamon sugar crunch.

Both the donut and muffin recipes take advantage of my simple trick for creating your own cake flour substitute. It's such a simple step that helps to ensure that these recipes turn out light and tender. It works so well that I incorporate it into almost all of my baking recipes. Once you learn How to Make Your Own Cake Flour Substitute, you just might find yourself doing the same.

Along with the cake flour substitute, I decided to include my simple steps to Make Your Own Magic Baking Pan Release Spread. I learned how to make this spread years ago and haven't looked back. It's the only prep I use in my baking pans and it never fails me. It only takes minutes to pull together using ingredients from your pantry and can be kept at the ready for when baking inspiration strikes.

After baking a batch of donuts or muffins, you'll have a bit of the apple cider concentrate left over. Don't worry, I've got just the recipe to put it to delicious use. Apple Cider Caramel Sauce is much easier to make than most caramels. It's a sauce rather than a sturdy caramel that can hold its shape at room temperature, so you don't even need to break out your candy thermometer.

The caramel sauce is delicious and full of apple cider flavor. There's been a lot of it here at the farmhouse while I tested the recipe over and over again. No one seemed to mind because we've been spooning it over scoops of vanilla ice cream, dipping slices of ripe local apples in it, and drizzling it on top of slices of apple pie. It's amazing and worth making the apple cider concentrate even if you have no intention of baking donuts or muffins, although I hope that you'll make them all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jesse Szewczyk'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.



# APPLE CIDER CONCENTRATE

*Apple cider is delicious, but the flavor often fades away after being baked. By making a double strength concentrate from the cider, you can still add the delicious flavor to your favorite fall recipes.*

## Ingredients (Makes 1 cup)

2 cups /1 pint apple cider

## Instructions (Time = 40 minutes)

Place the apple cider in a small pot over medium high heat. Bring the cider to a brisk simmer or low boil. Adjust the heat as needed to hold the mixture at a brisk simmer.

Simmer the cider briskly for approximately 30 minutes or until the cider has been reduced in volume by approximately half.

Remove the pot from the heat. Using a spoon or spatula, scrape any solids that have collected on the side of the pot and add them to the liquid.

Allow the apple cider concentrate to cool slightly before transferring to a storage container with a lid.

Apple cider concentrate can be kept in the refrigerator for 7-10 days. It can be frozen for long term storage and kept for 6 months without any loss in flavor.

## TIPS FROM THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN

Don't have apple cider on hand? You can substitute apple juice. The color and flavor will differ ever so slightly, but you'll end up with a concentrate that adds a crisp apple flavor to your recipes.

This recipe can easily be doubled or adjusted based on the quantity of apple cider you have on hand. The time needed to reduce your pot of apple cider by half may vary based on the amount of cider, the size and width of your pot, and the heat setting you choose on your stovetop. The exact timing isn't important, simply simmer your apple cider to reduce it by half.

# BAKED APPLE CIDER DONUTS

*Apple Cider Donuts are a sure sign of fall here in New England. I prefer to make this baked version so that I can skip the fryer and move right on to enjoying a warm donut with my morning coffee.*

## Ingredients (Makes 12 - 14 Donuts)

2 ½ cups All-purpose flour  
¼ cup cornstarch  
¼ cup granulated sugar  
½ cup brown sugar, packed  
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder  
¼ teaspoon baking soda  
¾ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 cup granulated sugar  
4 teaspoons ground cinnamon

4 tablespoons butter, melted  
¼ cup oil  
2 large eggs  
½ cup buttermilk  
½ cup apple cider concentrate

## Instructions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit with a baking rack set in the middle of the oven. Prepare your donut pans by coating them with your favorite baking spread or spray.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, cornstarch, sugar, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. I like to use a dry whisk to combine the dry ingredients, aerate them, and break up any small lumps. If you prefer, you can sift them together to achieve the same result. If you choose to sift them, I suggest adding the brown sugar directly to the bowl as it doesn't take well to sifting and has a tendency to clump.

Mix the cinnamon sugar coating mixture by combining the granulated sugar and cinnamon in a large bowl or shallow pan. I like to use a pie plate as I can add more than one donut at a time to coat the tops in the cinnamon sugar. Set this mixture aside.

In another bowl, combine the melted butter, oil, eggs, buttermilk, and apple cider concentrate. Whisk until the eggs have broken apart and the ingredients are well combined. Add them in a single addition to the dry ingredients and mix with a spatula or spoon until smooth. You may see small clumps of brown sugar in the batter. This is fine.

Transfer the batter to the prepared donut pans. This can be a tricky process until you get the hang of it. Many bakers use a pastry bag with a large open tip. I like to use a large spoon. Fill each cavity of the donut pan between ⅔ and ¾ full. This process is similar to filling cupcake liners for baking.

Just like a cupcake, baked donuts will rise as they bake, so take care not to overfill the pan. Overfilling will lead to misshapen donuts that may lose their recognizable donut shape. They'll be delicious but look more like muffin tops than donuts.

Bake the donuts in the preheated oven for 8–10 minutes. When fully baked, the donuts will have risen above the surface of the pan, have a springy texture when touched, and be slightly dry

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## A Few Notes about this Recipe

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on the top. A toothpick inserted into the center will come out clean or with small crumbs attached.

Remove the donuts from the oven and allow to cool in the pan for 5 minutes. Using a small spatula or butter knife, gently loosen each donut from the pan. I find that twisting the donut in the cavity is a good way to loosen them from the pan without breaking them.

Move the donuts to a wire rack. They should be warm when turning them in the cinnamon sugar. The cinnamon sugar adheres much better to a warm donut than a cool one.

Add a warm donut to the cinnamon sugar mixture. Use your hands or a large spoon to cover the donut with the cinnamon sugar. I turn the donuts several times to coat the surface liberally. Transfer the donuts to a wire rack to cool. Repeat until all of the donuts are covered with the cinnamon sugar..



### PREPARING YOUR BAKING PAN

Most donut pans have a nonstick surface. They don't technically require any preparation. However, I find that a very light coating of pan spray or my homemade magic pan release spread helps to ensure that the donuts come out of the pan cleanly. So, I brush a very light coating of magic pan release spread in each cavity of my donut pan to prep them and never have to worry that they'll stick to the pan.

### FLOUR

This recipe incorporates my homemade substitution for cake flour. Cake flour's lower protein content helps to create a more tender donut. A few years ago, I discovered that I could easily make my own cake flour substitute using All-purpose flour and cornstarch. If you prefer, you can omit the cornstarch and use 2  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups of all-purpose flour instead or cake flour if you happen to have it on hand.

### NO DONUT PAN?

No problem! You can bake Apple Cider Donut Muffins and enjoy the same flavor while using your standard muffin/cupcake pan.

### STORAGE

Donuts are always at their best the day they are made. They can be kept for several days stored at room temperature in a covered container.

# APPLE CIDER DONUT MUFFINS

*No donut pan? No problem! You can bake up the same delicious Apple Cider Donut flavor in muffin form. Use your muffin/cupcake pan and enjoy every delicious bite!*

## Ingredients (Makes 12 Muffins)

2 ½ cups All-purpose flour  
¾ cup cornstarch  
¾ cup granulated sugar  
½ cup brown sugar, packed  
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder  
¼ teaspoon baking soda  
¾ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 cup granulated sugar  
4 teaspoons ground cinnamon

4 tablespoons butter, melted  
¼ cup oil  
2 large eggs  
½ cup buttermilk  
½ cup apple cider concentrate

## Instructions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit with a baking rack set in the middle of the oven. Prepare your muffin pans by lining them with your favorite silicone, paper, parchment, or foil liners.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, cornstarch, sugar, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. I like to use a dry whisk to combine the dry ingredients, aerate them, and break up any small lumps. If you prefer, you can sift them together to achieve the same result. If you choose to sift them, I suggest adding the brown sugar directly to the bowl as it doesn't take well to sifting and has a tendency to clump.

Mix the cinnamon sugar coating mixture by combining the granulated sugar and cinnamon in a large bowl or shallow pan. I like to use a pie plate as I can add more than one muffin at a time to coat the tops in the cinnamon sugar. Set this mixture aside.

In another bowl, combine the melted butter, oil, eggs, buttermilk, and apple cider concentrate. Whisk until the eggs have broken apart and the ingredients are well combined. Add them in a single addition to the dry ingredients and mix with a spatula or spoon until smooth. You may see small clumps of brown sugar in the batter. This is fine.

Add about half of the cinnamon sugar coating mixture to the batter. Stir gently to combine.

Transfer the batter to the prepared muffin pan. Fill each muffin liner between ⅔ and ¾ full. The muffins will rise as they bake, so take care not to overfill the pan. Overfilling will lead to misshapen muffins that may rise up and out of the pan.

Bake the muffins in the preheated oven for around 15 minutes. When fully baked, the muffins will have risen above the surface of the pan to create a rounded dome and be slightly dry on the top. A toothpick inserted into the center will come out clean or with small crumbs attached.

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## A Few Notes about this Recipe

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Remove the muffins from the oven and allow to cool in the pan for 5 minutes. Using a small spatula or butter knife, gently loosen each muffin from the pan.

Move the muffins to a wire rack. They should be warm when coating them in the cinnamon sugar. The cinnamon sugar adheres much better to a warm muffin than a cool one.

Add a warm muffin or two to the cinnamon sugar mixture. Use your hands or a large spoon to cover the muffin's top with the cinnamon sugar and coat the entire surface.

Transfer the muffin to a wire rack to cool. Repeat until all of the muffins have been coated with the cinnamon sugar.

### PREPARING YOUR BAKING PAN

I like to line my muffin/cupcake pan using paper or silicone liners. Silicone liners work well and can be reused, although they are often difficult to clean after each use.

Paper liners, parchment liners, or foil liners are single use and don't require any cleaning. Choose the option that works best for you.

### FLOUR

This recipe incorporates my homemade substitution for cake flour. Cake flour's lower protein content helps to create a more tender donut. A few years ago, I discovered that I could easily make my own cake flour substitute using All-purpose flour and cornstarch. If you prefer, you can omit the cornstarch and use 2  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups of all-purpose flour instead of cake flour if you happen to have it on hand.

### CINNAMON SUGAR

An apple cider donut's sweetness comes almost entirely from the cinnamon sugar coating. The donut itself isn't very sweet at all. Because we are baking the batter as a muffin in this recipe, the cinnamon sugar coating is only on the top surface of the muffin which can leave the rest of the muffin to be a bit underflavored. I like to add half of the cinnamon sugar coating to the batter right before scooping it into the baking pan. It gives the muffins a delicious flavor inside and out.

### STORAGE

Muffins are always at their best the day they are made. They can be kept for several days stored at room temperature in a covered container.



# APPLE CIDER CARAMEL SAUCE

*I decided to deepen the flavor in my standard caramel sauce by making it with apple cider concentrate instead of water. The result is delicious caramel sauce with a hint of apple flavor. It's perfect for fall.*

## Ingredients (Makes 10 ounces)

- ¼ cup apple cider concentrate
- ¼ cup brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter, cubed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

## Instructions (Time = 30 minutes)

Place the apple cider concentrate, brown sugar, and granulated sugar in a small saucepan. Stir to combine, scraping the sides of the pot to remove any sugar which could crystallize as the caramel is being made.

Place the pan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil without stirring. Before the caramel comes to a boil, you may notice bubbling activity around the edge of the pot. Once the entire mixture comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium or as needed to keep it at a gentle boil.

Continue to boil for 10-12 minutes without stirring. The bubbles should increase in size and the caramel will develop a deep amber color.

As the caramel boils, warm the heavy cream in another small pot or in the microwave. It does not need to be boiling, just warm to the touch. Add the salt to the cream and stir.

When the 10-12 minutes have elapsed, add the warm cream to the caramel; pot in a gentle stream and whisk for approximately one minute. The mixture may bubble violently as the hot caramel accepts the cream. Take care not to allow the caramel mixture to splash onto your hands.

Simmer the caramel over medium-low heat for 3-4 minutes. If you prefer to use a candy thermometer rather than visually determining that the caramel sauce is finished, the caramel should register a temperature slightly below the soft ball stage, or around 220 – 225 degrees Fahrenheit.

Remove the pan from the heat. Add the butter and vanilla to the pot and stir until melted and fully combined. Transfer the caramel sauce to a glass container and allow to cool to room temperature before adding a lid.

The caramel sauce can be kept for 7-10 days in the refrigerator in a container with a tight-fitting lid.

## TIPS FROM THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN

This is a caramel sauce rather than a traditional caramel in the firm candy sense. It's smooth and pourable, perfect for drizzling over vanilla ice cream, a slice of warm apple pie, or dipping apple slices in.

Because it is a caramel sauce rather than a caramel that needs to hold its shape at room temperature, the process of making it is a little more forgiving. You don't even need to use a candy thermometer. Of course, you can if you prefer to.

The salt in this recipe is added merely for flavor. It balances the sweetness of the caramel nicely without being salty. If you prefer, you can omit the salt entirely or adjust it to your taste. If you double the salt to ½ teaspoon, you'll create a delicious salted caramel.



# HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN BAKING PAN RELEASE SPREAD

I love to bake cakes. From birthday cakes worthy of a celebration to simple kitchen counter cakes, they are among my favorite treats to bake for my family. When I bake cakes, I want to avoid what can be the most frustrating part of the cake baking experience: the cake sticking to the pan and not releasing cleanly. When that happens, the resulting cake is reduced to rubble. When baking in an intricately patterned Bundt pan, the odds of the cake sticking to the pan are increased with every beautiful curve.

In the past, I've tried the baking pan sprays that are available at the grocery and specialty kitchen store. They worked well enough, but the spray tended to slide down the sides of the pan, accumulating in the crevices in the bottom of my Bundt pan. When the resulting cake was turned out of the pan, there would be a large piece at the top of each peak of the cake that was unsightly and made up of the oily spray that had congealed and solidified during baking.

I tried buttering the pans but found that to be a frustrating experience. I hadn't realized that the milk solids in the butter would actively conspire against me, but they sure did. Cake after cake tasted delicious with a lovely buttery flavor on its exterior. Sadly, some of that exterior was always left clinging to the pan after the cake had been turned out onto a wire rack to cool.

The reason that butter doesn't make a great pan spread is simple. Nearly a quarter of butter's weight is water. When the heat of the oven hits the butter that has been used to coat the pan, the butter solids tend to separate, leaving the water behind. The water does not resist sticking like fat does, allowing the cake to firmly adhere to the pan, in fact drawing it to the pan almost like glue.

Enter shortening and vegetable oil. They are far superior for coating a baking pan because they are 100% fat. There's nothing to separate out as the cake bakes, no water to encourage the cake to stick to the pan and resist coming out cleanly. There's a perfect reason that our grandmothers reached for shortening or lard to grease their baking pans: they work every time.

While I keep lard on hand, I didn't want to impart any flavor or scent to the cakes I was baking. I wanted to use something that was flavor neutral. So, I tested a few fats on their own. Shortening worked well but was a little tricky to apply to more intricate Bundt pans. The shortening tended to be too thick to evenly apply to the crevices of the pan.



Canola and safflower oil were easy to apply but had to be applied immediately before adding the batter to the pan. I tend to prepare my baking pans at the early end of my baking when I set the oven temperature, before I mix up my cake batter. When I used oil, it ran down the sides of the pan as I was mixing the batter, pooling in the bottom of the pan.

When I decided to try brushing fat onto the surface of the pan and dusting with flour, it was the mess you would expect when trying to adhere a dry, powdery substance to an oil coated surface. I ended up with more flour on the counter than in the pan and the flour didn't coat the oily surface evenly. There wasn't a good method for me to try and even out the coating without ruining it.

Often, the color of the baked cake had an odd appearance due to flour that had adhered to the

surface of the cake as it baked. This wasn't my idea of a foolproof method for success.

After a little research, I happened upon just the sort of magical, foolproof baking spread I had been looking for: a homemade version. I loved the thought of a homemade mixture that allowed me to control the ingredients without needing to buy expensive items that I didn't have another use for. By mixing a few of the baking staples I had in the pantry, I created a silky mixture that was just what I had been looking for.

By mixing both shortening and cooking oil together, I could combine the best qualities of each while mitigating the difficulties they had presented when used on their own. Better yet, I could mix the flour into the fats until it was smooth and perfect for spreading. The flour would provide an added bit of insurance when the moment came to try and remove the cake from the pan without creating a powdery film.

On successive batches, I discovered that adding just a bit of cornstarch helped to give the spread a silky texture that was even easier to apply to my baking pans.

This homemade magical pan spread is so easy to apply to baking pans. It doesn't pool in the crevices in a Bundt pan, can be applied ahead of time, and works perfectly every time. This spread won't add any flavor to your cakes. It won't alter the color of your cake. You won't need to try to dust an oily pan with flour and make a mess of your kitchen.

It only takes a few minutes to mix up a jar full of this spread to keep in the pantry. When you're ready to bake, simply use a pastry brush to spread a thin coating of it on the surface of your baking pan. That's it.

This spread works for me every single time. Your cakes will practically fall out of the baking pan and you'll be left to wonder where this spread has been your whole baking life.

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## BAKING PAN RELEASE SPREAD

*Over the years, I have tried different sprays, spreads, and methods for prepping baking pans. Then I decided to make my own. I was thrilled when it worked better than any of the other options I tried.*

### Ingredients

½ cup shortening, room temperature

½ cup neutral flavored oil

½ cup all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon cornstarch

The ingredients in this spread are shelf stable, so the mixture can be kept at room temperature in a covered container. I like to store it in my pantry near oil and other ingredients that I keep in a cool, dark place.

I bake a lot, so I use a jar of this fairly quickly and shelf life has never been an issue for me. If you bake less often or live in a warmer climate, you can store your spread in the refrigerator to extend its shelf life. If it hasn't been used in a while, the oil may separate a bit. Give it a stir and it will be ready to use.

### Instructions

In a medium bowl, combine the shortening and oil. Using a spoon, whisk, or electric mixer, mix until well combined. The shortening may form small rice-sized pieces. Don't worry, they should break apart as the dry ingredients are incorporated.

Add the flour and cornstarch and continue to mix until the spread is glossy and silky smooth. Transfer the spread to a jelly jar or Mason jar with a tight-fitting lid. I use a repurposed 14-ounce jelly jar or a Mason jar that holds 16 ounces.

When you are ready to bake, use a pastry brush to apply a thin layer of this spread to all the surfaces of your baking pan that the batter will come into contact with. If you're baking in a Bundt cake or tube pan, don't forget to apply the spread to the center tube.

# HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN CAKE FLOUR SUBSTITUTE

There I was, reading a recipe for what sounded like a delicious cake. I was inspired to head into the farmhouse kitchen to make one for my family. I scanned through the list of ingredients, mentally placing a check mark on each line, happy to see that I had each ingredient on hand. Then I came to cake flour and everything came to a screeching halt.

Cake flour is all but impossible for me to purchase at the grocery store. Each box seems to carry an allergy warning that prevents me from being able to invite the ingredient into our kitchen. We are completely peanut and tree nut free, so buying a box of cake flour that might contain both simply wasn't an option.

Do you have to use cake flour even when it is called for in a recipe? In a word, no. You just don't. All-purpose flour is exactly what it is named and can be used for nearly any purpose. In the same way that you don't have to use bread flour to make delicious bread, you don't need to use cake flour to make a scrumptious cake.

I know that can be confusing. Why do recipes call for specialty flours if all-purpose will do? It's simple. Specialty flours help to stack the odds in a baker's favor. If you use a very high protein content flour for making bread, you are more likely to create a bread with strong gluten bonds and the texture that is the hallmark of a great loaf of bread.

At the opposite end of the protein/flour spectrum is cake flour. If you use a very low protein cake flour to make a cake, cookie, or other pastry that you want to be light and tender, the odds are in your favor. Less protein means that you don't have to worry quite as much about overmixing the batter or dough and creating a tough, chewy texture in your recipe.

I knew that cake flour was designed specifically for cake baking. In fact, each type of flour is designed to deliver differing levels of protein, gluten, and density to recipes. Bread flour often promises a protein content in excess of 12%. All-purpose flour typically has a protein content around 11% while cake flour comes in at between 6-8%.

After a bit of research, I found that I could indeed make my own cake flour substitute using two ingredients that I always have on hand in the pantry: all-purpose flour and cornstarch. By combining the two, I can create a flour that has a reduced protein content with less gluten, a silky texture, and the density that cake flour is known for. I could also sidestep peanuts and tree nuts, keeping our kitchen safe for my family.



Again, it isn't necessary to use specialty flours when baking a cake, but if a technique as simple as removing a spoonful or two of the flour and replacing it with cornstarch can help to make the cake or recipe I am baking turn out more deliciously, I can't come up with a reason not to do it.

I have baked recipes side by side as a test using this method of making my own cake flour substitute. While my tests weren't scientific enough for NASA, they were good enough for me to decide that the versions that included this trick were indeed lighter in texture. They had a superior crumb and just felt more delicate. After confirming that result to be the case with cakes, cookies, and baked donuts, I was sold.

I started incorporating this cake flour substitute into all of my non-bread baking recipes a few years ago. The process is so simple and the results are reliably delicious. I hope that you'll give it a try in your favorite baking recipes and that it will work as well for you as it does for me in the Farmhouse Kitchen.

# CAKE FLOUR SUBSTITUTE

*Have you ever stumbled across a delicious recipe only to discover that it requires cake flour? If you have it in the pantry, hooray. If not, you can make your own in minutes.*

## Ingredients

1 cup all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons cornstarch

## Instructions

Add the all-purpose flour to a bowl. Remove 2 tablespoons of the flour and replace it with the cornstarch. Use a whisk to combine the dry ingredients and break up any small lumps.

Use as needed in any recipe that calls for cake flour or recipes that might benefit from a flour that has less protein and will help to ensure a tender pastry. I use it in nearly all of my non-bread baking recipes.

You can mix a large quantity of this cake flour substitute together and keep it in your pantry with your flours and meals so that it is always ready to bake with.

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ONCE YOU KNOW HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN CAKE FLOUR SUBSTITUTE, YOU'LL WANT TO GIVE THESE RECIPES A TRY...



BUTTERMILK SPONGE CAKE



PUMPKIN BREAD



CHOCOLATE BUTTERMILK CAKE



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