

Apple, Chamomile and Lemon Loaf



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The below recipe and introduction appeared in a Stuff article written by Nicola Galloway from Homegrown Kitchen who is an award-winning food writer, cookbook author and culinary tutor. Find more of her beautiful recipes at: www.homegrown-kitchen.co.nz

We served this loaf for afternoon tea and it was very popular. We used our Stir Tea loose leaf chamomile for the recipe.



Apple and chamomile is such a wonderful combination with the chamomile adding a unique flavour note to the loaf. I used dried chamomile flower, rubbing the dried flowers first to break them up. The flowers are edible and cook into the loaf, while adding a gentle texture to the syrup. If preferred, the syrup can be strained through a sieve to remove the herb pieces before spooning over the cooked loaf.

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 35-40 minutes

Makes: 8-10 slices

Ingredients

- 1½ cups (225g) plain white flour (you can use wheat, spelt or gluten-free flour mix)
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- Pinch of fine salt
- ⅓ cup sugar or honey
- 2 eggs
- 100ml olive oil (or use a milder oil)
- ¾ cup (about 200g) apple sauce (see directions below method)
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 tsp dried chamomile (optional)

Lemon chamomile syrup

- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp dried chamomile
- Juice of 1 lemon, about 3-4 tbsp

Apple Sauce

6 - 8 apples - choose cooking apples such as cox's orange, Sturmer pippin or Ballarat, or easy to find granny smith and Braeburn.

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C (fan 160C). Lightly grease a loaf tin and line with a strip of baking paper, leaving extra overhang for lifting out the baked loaf.
2. In a small mixing bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Whisk to combine.
3. In a large mixing bowl whisk together the sugar, eggs and oil until aerated and creamy. Add the applesauce, lemon zest and dried chamomile (rub this gently between your fingers to break up the flowers). Whisk to combine.
4. Add the dry ingredients to the mixing bowl and use a spatula to fold together until just combined. Pour into the tin and smooth off the surface. It will be quite a wet batter, this is perfect.
5. Bake for 35-40 minutes until an inserted skewer comes out clean.
6. While the loaf is cooking, prepare the syrup. In a small bowl combine the sugar and chamomile (again rubbing the loose herb to break up larger pieces if needed). Add the lemon juice and mix to combine. Set aside for the sugar to dissolve and herb to infuse.
7. When the loaf comes out of the oven, immediately pierce it half a dozen times with a small knife then spoon over the lemon syrup (straining first to remove the chamomile if you wish).
8. Leave to cool in the tin, then use the baking paper overhang to lift and transfer the loaf to a serving plate. Cut the loaf into slices to serve, with yoghurt or on its own.

Apple Sauce:

1. To make applesauce peel, core and roughly chop
2. Put the apples into a saucepan with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water (just enough to steam them), cover and cook over a low heat for about 30 minutes until tender.
3. Mash until smooth, or purée with a stick blender. A mouli or food mill can also be used here (my preference), in which case skip the peeling and coring, simply cut the apples into wedges and cook as above.
4. Once tender, pass through a sieve to separate the creamy apple flesh from the tough core and skin. Store applesauce in a jar in the fridge and use within a week.