

Burnt Leather Cake

Caramels are one of the oldest candies. Caramel, which is essentially burned sugar, appeared in kitchens in the early 1900s in the form of an early style of caramel cake. White sugar and boiling water was used to create a burnt syrup which was dark brown in colour thus leading to the cake being named “burnt leather cake”. The cake has also been known as “burnt sugar cake” and “brownstone front cake” which contains chocolate to create an even darker colour. The cake became one of the most popular desserts at the turn of the century and its popularity continued well into the Great Depression era of the 1930s.

For the syrup:

1 cup white sugar

1/2 cup boiling water

For the cake:

1/2 cup butter (creamed)

1/2 cup sugar

2 egg yolks

2 egg whites

1 cup warm water

2 1/2 cups flour

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 teaspoons baking powder

First create the syrup by heating 1 cup of white sugar in a pan on the stovetop, stirring constantly until scorched a rich brown, then add 1/2 cup boiling water.

For the cake beat together 1/2 cup creamed butter, 1/2 cup sugar, yolks of 2 eggs, 1 cup of luke warm water and 2 cups flour. Beat for 5 minutes. Then add 3 tablespoons of syrup, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 2 teaspoons baking powder 1/2 cup flour and the beaten whites of 2 eggs. Pour batter into greased and floured cake pan. Bake in oven at 350 F (175 C) for 20-30 minutes.

*Caramel icing goes well with this cake.