

## APRICOT CRUMBLE COFFEE CAKE

(from *Helen Fletcher's Pastries Like a Pro*)

¾ cup unsalted butter (170 grams)  
1 teaspoon active dry yeast  
3 tablespoons warm water  
Pinch granulated sugar  
2 ¼ cup bread flour (315 grams)  
1 ½ tablespoons granulated sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
3 large eggs, room temperature  
¼ cup half and half

### Filling

¾ pound dried apricots  
1 cup water  
5 tablespoons butter (75 grams)  
½ cup powdered sugar (65 grams)  
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla  
2 teaspoons cocoa

### Almond Paste Crumb Topping

1 cup cake flour (125 grams)  
½ cup almond paste (125 grams)  
⅔ cup granulated sugar (130 grams)  
½ cup unsalted butter (114 grams)

### Assembly

1 large egg, well beaten

Make the brioche dough: Cut the butter into small pieces by cutting the stick in half lengthwise, then cutting it into half inch pieces. Place it back in the refrigerator to keep cold. Make a sponge by dissolving the yeast and pinch of granulated sugar in the 3 tablespoons warm water. Add 3 tablespoons flour from the measured amount of 2 ¼ cups flour. Stir together to completely mix the ingredients. Cover with film and set aside to double or more while preparing the rest of the ingredients.

In the processor bowl fitted with the steel blade, place the remaining flour, salt and sugar. Process 5 seconds to mix. Place the cold butter in a circle over the flour. Process the butter until it is indistinguishable, about 20 seconds. Scrape down and process about 5 seconds more. Place the eggs in a circle over the dry ingredients, pour the cream over the eggs, and add the sponge, also in a circle. Process approximately 20 to 25 seconds until the ball which initially forms breaks down into a creamy, evenly dispersed batter in the processor bowl. Do not stop processing until the batter is formed, as the motor may stall when you try to restart it. If the ball doesn't break down, that's fine as long as everything is mixed well. Remove from the processor bowl and place in an ungreased bowl. Cover securely with plastic wrap and allow to rise until double in bulk about 2 to 2 ½ hours. Stir down and refrigerate overnight. Punch down and use as directed. It can stay in the refrigerator for up to 3 days before using.

for the filling:

Place the apricots and water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and, stir frequently until most of the water is gone. Place the apricots and remaining ingredients, except the cocoa, in a processor bowl and process until smooth. Set aside to cool. Stir the cocoa in. This may be made a week ahead and stored in the refrigerator. Remove to room temperature before using.

for the crumb topping:

Place the flour and almond paste (either home made or bought) in the bowl of a processor. Process until the almond paste is indistinguishable. Add the sugar and butter and process until it begins to form crumbs. Switch to pulses and pulse only until large crumbs form. Remove them to a bowl and refrigerate until needed.

To assemble the coffee cake:

Spray a 9×3" cheesecake or springform pan with a non-stick baking spray. Set aside.

Remove the brioche from the refrigerator, punch down, pat into a rectangle on a lightly floured surface and roll into a 20×11 inch rectangle so the long horizontally in front of you to make rolling up easier.

Spread the filling evenly over the brioche within ½" of the edges. Roll up tightly from the 20" side and pinch the seam securely together. Roll and gently stretch it until it is 30" long. If it is very soft at this time, coil it up on a parchment lined baking sheet and chill to firm up. Do not let it freeze.

Starting in the middle of the pan, coil the roll around towards the outer edge of the pan. Press it down to flatten and fill the pan. Cover with a towel and let rise until doubled in bulk. Because everything is cold, this could take 4 to 4 ½ hours to rise. Heat the oven to 375F. When the coffee cake is full risen, brush it with the beaten egg and distribute the almond paste crumbs evenly over the brioche. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes until the top is browned. A tester is difficult here because the filling stays moist and clings to the tester. If the top begins to brown too quickly, tent it with foil. Cool until barely warm and release the cake. Dust with powdered sugar to serve.