



Caramelized Pear Gingerbread Upside Down Cake (inspired by Purity Cookbook)

3 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup granulated sugar
2 firm but ripe pears, peeled cored and sliced
1/4 teaspoon coarse ground black pepper

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon baking soda
1-1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/3 cup shortening
1/3 cup brown sugar
1 egg
3/4 cup molasses
3/4 cup sour milk or buttermilk

Using a 9 inch cast iron pan, melt butter over low heat. Add sugar and cook, stirring occasionally until sugar melts and turns golden in color - 5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Carefully place pear slices on top of caramelized sugar/butter mixture. Sprinkle with coarse ground black pepper and set aside. Preheat oven to 325.

In a small bowl, whisk together flour, salt, baking soda, and spices until well combined. Using a medium bowl and electric mixer, cream shortening and brown sugar until light. Add egg and molasses, mixing until well combined and light in texture. Add dry ingredients alternately with sour milk, beginning and ending with dry ingredients. Mix only until combined. Pour on top of pears in prepared pan and spread to level. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until tester inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from oven and rest for a few minutes, then carefully flip upside down onto a plate. Remove cast iron pan. Serve gingerbread with sweetened whipped cream.