

ST LOUIS OOEY GOOEY BUTTER CAKE

All I gotta say about this one is...I was not prepared. I was not ready. I was NOT expecting this cake to go that hard. Like...I get it, sugar, butter and vanilla is a pretty decent throuple but...THIS decent?? The soft, gloopy, mildly set middle has a crazy level of both comfort and joy. On one hand it's giving you a sumptuous hug and then on the other hand it reminds me of licking cake batter from the bowl when my mum used to make/attempt fairy cakes as a kid.

Recipe Makes: 1 x 23 by 33 cm / 9 by 13 inch deep dish

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CAKE DOUGH

45 ml Whole Milk
5 g Active Dry Yeast
85 g Unsalted Butter*
45 g Caster Sugar
5 g Sea Salt
1 Large Egg
215 g Plain/AP Flour, sifted
1 tsp Vanilla Bean Paste

TOPPING

50 ml Golden Syrup**
1.5 tsp Vanilla Bean Paste
170 g Unsalted Butter*
300 g Caster Sugar
0.5 tsp Sea Salt
1 Large Egg
145 g Plain Flour, sifted

TO FINISH

Icing Sugar, to dust
* room temp
** can sub for Corn Syrup

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Let's get started with the **cake dough**. In a small bowl, add the milk along with 2 tbsp of warm water. Sprinkle in the yeast and use a balloon whisk to mix until it's mostly dissolved.

Pop a cloth over the top and leave it to sit for about 10 mins to activate. Yes I know we are using 'active' dried yeast so some of you may think what is the point but this is a real slow burner of a prove so give the dough a helping hand by getting that yeast thriving before we use it.

Meanwhile, add the butter, sugar and salt to a stand mixer bowl and use the paddle attachment to mix for about 5 minutes until light and aerated.

Scrape down the sides and bottom before adding in the egg. Beat well until everything had emulsified. **NOTE:** IF your mix curdles slightly or looks separated, this is because your butter was too cold. Use a blow torch (if you have one) to gently warm the bowl sides to help remedy if so. If you don't have one, using a hair dryer will also do the same thing but remember you are gently warming the bowl, not giving it a blow dry.

Add in the flour, vanilla bean and yeasty milk to the bowl and mix on low for 2 minutes until everything has combined. Switch to a high speed and mix for 8 minutes until you're left with a soft, elasticated dough which has come away from the sides and isn't sticky to touch.

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Grab a 23 by 33 cm / 9 by 13 inch deep baking dish (don't grease it) and press the dough into the base. Make sure it covers the entire bottom and try to create an even layer. Cover with clingfilm and leave somewhere warm for 3 hours. **NOTE:** I prove my dough in an unheated oven with a tray filled with boiling water at the base. This creates a good steamy, warm environment for your dough to thrive.

After 2.45 hours, if you are proving in the oven, remove the dough and preheat your oven to 180C/350F/Gas Mark 4.

Make the **cake topping** by mixing the golden syrup along with 2 tbsp of water and vanilla bean paste.

Add the butter, sugar and salt to a stand mixer bowl and use the paddle attachment to cream together for about 8 minutes until light and fluffy.

Scrape down the sides and bottom and add the egg. Beat well until the mixture is smooth. **NOTE:** If your mix looks curdled, repeat the bowl warming process as you did for the dough previously.

Add in the flour and golden syrup and mix until everything has just combined.

Spoon the mix (I used an ice cream scoop for ease) over the top of your risen dough. Use an offset palette knife or back of a spoon to gently spread for an even layer.

Pop into the oven and bake for 15 minutes. Reduce the oven temp by 20 degrees and bake for another 20 minutes.

Remove the cake from the oven (embrace the cake jiggle) and leave to cool and set. **NOTE:** I left mine overnight but totally get if you want to tuck in sooner. Just ensure the middle is no longer jiggly and is firm to touch.

Once cooled, **finish** by generously dusting the top with icing sugar and slice and serve.