

Apple Charlotte

Ingredients

- 6 crisp apples (about 500 g) such as pink lady, fuji or jazz, peeled, cored, quartered and sliced, seeds removed
- 1/2 cup white granulated sugar
- 4 whole cloves
- zest of 1 lemon
- 100 g butter, softened
- 1 loaf of white sliced sandwich bread
cream, ice-cream or custard, to serve



Note

This dish is reputedly named after Queen Charlotte, the wife of 18th-century British monarch George III, but remained popular well into the 20th century. Its beauty is in its humble style and simplicity. Serve with thick cream, ice-cream or warmed custard.

Directions

Preheat oven to 200°C (180°C fan-forced).



Put the apple in a saucepan with the sugar, cloves, lemon zest and 1/2 cup of water, and simmer gently until the apple is just cooked and still al dente. Remove the pan from the heat. Remove the apple pieces from the syrup with a slotted spoon and set aside. Reheat the syrup and reduce it to a light pouring consistency.

Meanwhile, grease a 22-cm pie dish with some of the butter. Butter 12–15 slices of bread, and remove and discard the crusts. Cut the bread into fingers or triangles and line the base and sides of the pie dish with the pieces, buttered side up, ensuring that each piece overlaps slightly so that there are no gaps, and that the bread reaches the rim of the dish. Arrange the bread neatly, remembering that when turned out, this will form the top of the charlotte.

Spoon the apple into the dish and cover with the remaining pieces of bread, buttered side down (butter more slices as needed). Press the edges of the bread together so that there are no gaps. Trim any untidy edges if necessary.

Bake for 20–25 minutes or until the top of the pie is nicely browned, then remove from the oven and allow it to rest in the dish for a few minutes before turning it out onto a board or serving plate.

Serve warm, with a drizzle of the syrup and cream, ice-cream or custard.

