

Aranygaluska (Hungarian Golden Pull-Apart Cake with Walnuts and Apricot Jam)

Recipe By Joan Nathan



Cooking and Prep:  2 h

Serves:  8

Contains:     

Preference: Parve

Difficulty: Easy

Diet: Vegetarian, Pescetarian

Aranygaluska, also called golden dumpling cake, butter puffs, and monkey bread, has been extolled by Jewish immigrants from Hungary for years. I first noticed a recipe for the cake in George Lang's *The Cuisine of Hungary* from 1971. Aranygaluska probably started as a rich cake, like the German Dampfnudeln (see my *Jewish Cooking in America*) served with fish or soup on Fridays, when no meat was allowed for Catholics. Jews who separated meat from dairy in their diet would serve it with a fish or nonmeat soup.

Agnes Sanders, who grew up under Communism in Miskolc, Hungary, kindly showed me how she makes aranygaluska in her kitchen on New York's Upper West Side. "It wasn't bad growing up during the Communist [period] in Hungary," she told me. "Everyone was equally poor but we could go anywhere." When her mother died, her father, fearful that she would not marry a Jew, sent her to Detroit to live with an uncle in 1965. Everyone else in her family had died in the Nazi concentration camps.

Agnes's version of aranygaluska, learned in this country, was not as rich as I remembered it. I have tweaked her recipe here and there, adding ingredients like vanilla to the cake. I also add a chocolate alternative to the nuts, called kuchembuchem (one of those marvelous made-up Yiddish rhyming names), often made with leftover babka dough. Try one or both versions.

Ingredients (14)

Main ingredients

- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast such as **Gefen Instant Dry Yeast**
- 1 cup (235 milliliters) warm milk
- 1/2 cup (100 grams) sugar, plus 2 tablespoons
- 4 large eggs
- zest of 1 orange
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup plus 4 tablespoons (2 and 1/2 sticks/282 grams) unsalted butter, at room temperature, divided
- 4 and 1/2 cups (600 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour, approximately
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 and 1/2 cups (180 grams) ground walnuts
- 6 tablespoons (83 grams) brown sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon **Gefen Cinnamon**
- 3 tablespoons cake or butter cookie crumbs
- 3/4 cup (150 grams) **Tuscanini Apricot** or plum jam

Start Cooking

Prepare the Aranygaluska

1. Dissolve the yeast in the warm milk in the bowl of a standing mixer equipped with a paddle attachment. Add 1/4 cup of the sugar, the eggs, orange zest, vanilla, and one stick of butter. Gradually add the flour and salt, beating until mixed. Cover the bowl and leave for an hour, or until the dough has about doubled in size.
- 2.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and butter a 10-inch round pan with some of the second stick of butter.

3. Melt what is left of the second stick of butter plus the remaining half stick and put it in a small bowl. In a separate bowl, mix the walnuts, brown sugar, remaining white sugar, cinnamon, and the cake or cookie crumbs.
4. Roll the dough into a 1/2-inch-thick circle. Using a one-inch cookie or biscuit cutter, cut circles of dough.
5. Dip the circles first in the butter, then in the nut mixture and set in the pan, almost touching each other. After a layer is completed, spoon on dollops of jam.
6. Make a second layer, filling in the holes with dough, then jam, continuing and rerolling until the dough is used up, ending with the walnut topping but not the jam.
7. Bake in the oven for 35 to 40 minutes, or until golden brown and set.
8. Leave in the pan for a few minutes, then turn onto a plate and serve warm. You can either cut the cake or pull the sections apart.
9. Serve for a sweet breakfast treat, or as a dessert, served with good vanilla or rum raisin ice cream.

Note:

You can substitute 1/4 cup good-quality unsweetened cocoa and 3/4 cup sugar for the nut topping. Then, after dipping the rounds in butter, dip them in the chocolate-sugar mixture and proceed as above. Substitute the jam with Nutella or another chocolate spread.

Sometimes if serving aranygaluska for breakfast for a family gathering, I mold the cake and refrigerate it overnight. The next morning, while my guests are still sleeping, I bake it for them to pull apart when they wake up. Yum!

Credits

Photography by Gabriela Herman