

Italian Plum Cake - adapted from JSCooks on Food52

- 1 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, plus more for pan
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened, plus more for pan
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup sour cream, at room temperature
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons firmly packed light or dark brown sugar
- 12 small to medium, firm-ripe prune plums, halved lengthwise and pitted
- Lightly sweetened, softly whipped cream (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-by-2-inch round cake pan. Line the bottom with parchment paper and butter the parchment. Dust the pan with flour.

Stir together the flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in a small bowl. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer (or other large bowl if using a handheld mixer), rub the lemon zest into the sugar. Add the butter and beat on medium speed until light, about 5 minutes. Mix in the eggs, one at a time, beating well and scraping down the bowl after each addition. Mix in the sour cream and vanilla until well combined. On low speed, add the flour mixture just until combined.

Spread half of the batter evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon brown sugar and top with 12 of the plum halves, cut side down. Spoon the rest of the batter on top and carefully spread it out. Arrange the remaining 12 plum halves, cut side up, over the top. Sprinkle the remaining 1 tablespoon brown sugar over the plums.

Bake until the cake is golden and pulling away from the sides of the pan and a toothpick inserted near the center tests clean, 50 to 55 minutes. Let cool in the pan on a wire rack for 20 minutes.

Run a thin knife around the edges of the cake to loosen it from the pan. Invert a flat plate over the pan. Using oven mitts if needed, grasp the plate and pan tightly together on both sides and invert the plate and pan to release the cake onto the plate. Lift off the pan and peel off the parchment. Invert the cake again onto a serving plate

Serve warm or at room temperature, with whipped cream, if desired.