

# Fresh apricots are best when ripe-to-bursting

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Apricots are to me the most fragrant of all fruits. To get the full flavor they must be very ripe and when at their best they are so soft they are difficult to handle; quick to burst into a juicy pulp.

In my youth, in our garden, we had several apricot trees. I remember their splendor in early spring when they blossomed. Later, on hot summer days we went to the garden looking at the apricots. If we were clever, we managed to be on the right spot, when the overripe fruit, heavy with juice, fell down, right into our wide open mouths.

The following is one of my many fruit dessert recipes. It is a favorite because the kuchen is very light and tasty. Maybe I favor it also because its preparation takes little time.

## Viennese Apricot Squares

8-10 ripe but not mushy apricots

Soft butter and sugar to prepare the baking pan

1/4 cup butter

3/4 cup sugar

2 eggs

1 1/4 cup sifted flour

1 1/4 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring

Grated rind of half a lemon  
Vanilla sugar

Rinse apricots in colander, dry them with paper towels. Apricots have a very thin skin, they do not need peeling. Cut them in halves, remove stones. Leave them in halves or cut them to quarters. Spread them out on paper towel, cut side up.

Butter and sprinkle with sugar a 9-by-9-inch square baking pan. Invert and shake out surplus sugar.

Cream butter, add sugar alternately with the eggs, cream till light and fluffy. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add alternately with the milk and blend well. Add vanilla and grated lemon rind. Mix again, then spread batter evenly into the prepared baking pan. Arrange apricots on top of batter.

Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees F. for about 25 to 35 minutes or till batter is lightly browned.

Test with toothpick for readiness in a spot where batter is showing, i.e. is not covered with apricots.

Cool on a cake rack, sprinkle with vanilla sugar, cut into squares, and serve cooled but not chilled.

Note: In order to always have the most aromatic vanilla sugar on your pantry shelf, keep De Luxe Superfine Sugar in a tightly covered glass jar with a vanilla bean cut into 1-inch pieces.