



Honeyed Carrot Cake

There is probably no other cake that we crave and take pleasure in all year long than this moist and dense carrot cake. An American classic, this delectable version is sweetened with honey; though delicious plain, it's even tastier when frosted with a sweet and tangy honeyed cream cheese frosting. Loaded with carrots, apples, and hazelnuts, this carrot cake is a delightful and simple way to eat your fruit and vegetables...so go ahead and dig in!

10-12 servings

Ingredients

For the carrot cake:

1 ½ cups sugar

½ cup honey

1 cup oil

4 eggs

2 cups all purpose flour

1 tsp baking powder

1 ½ tsp baking soda

1 ½ tsp salt

2 tsp cinnamon

½ tsp nutmeg

½ tsp mace

½ tsp ginger

4 cups finely grated carrots, puréed in food processor

2 cups finely grated apples, preferably Granny Smith or another slightly tart apple, puréed in food processor

1 cup hazelnuts, toasted and finely ground in a food processor

For the honey frosting:

2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, room temperature

½ cup unsalted butter, room temperature

1 1-lb bag powdered sugar

¼ tsp salt

¾ cup honey

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

[Chef's Note: Measure carrots, apples and hazelnuts each after grating or chopping, and before running in food processor. For accurate results, do not measure flour directly from the bag; instead, scoop the flour using a spoon into dry measuring cups and level with the back of a knife or spatula.]

Preparation

Prepare the cake:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Line the bottom of 3 9-inch cake pans with parchment paper, then grease with butter, and coat lightly with sugar.

Beat sugar, honey and oil together in a large bowl. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. In another bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and spices. Add dry mixture to the oil mixture and fold in, blending well. Fold in carrots, apples and hazelnuts. Mix well to get rid of any clumps.

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Pour batter into prepared pans. Bake for 30 minutes until golden and cake springs back when touched. Cool completely. Frost if desired (see instructions below).

[Chef's Note: A stand mixer is almost always preferred over a hand-held mixer when making a cake, both for ease and use of the paddle attachment option. Either work in this case, as there is no butter to cream, so make it easy on your arms and opt for the stand mixer if you have access to one. Once the dry ingredients are added to the wet, to avoid overmixing and forming too much gluten (which produces a tougher cake), turn off the mixer and use your arm power to mix the batter.]

Prepare the frosting:

Beat cream cheese and butter until creamy. Gradually beat in powdered sugar and salt until fluffy. Add honey and vanilla and beat until the frosting reaches a smooth and spreadable consistency. If frosting is very soft, chill until firm enough to spread.

Service

Serve immediately or store frosted cake in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Both cake and frosting can be made up to 3 days in advance, wrapped tightly and stored in the refrigerator before frosting.

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