



Carrot Spice Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting

By Susan Spungen
Serves 8 to 10

For the cake:

- Unsalted butter, for the pan
- 1 ½ cups (192 g) all-purpose flour, plus more for the flouring pan
- 1 ½ cups (150 g) pecans
- ¾ cup plus 3 tablespoons vegetable or light olive oil
- ½ cup (101 g) granulated sugar
- ¾ cup (165 g) packed light brown sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground cardamom
- Generous grating of nutmeg
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves

- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3 cups grated carrots (from 4 to 6 carrots)
- ¾ cup golden raisins

For the frosting:

- 8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup (125 g) confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Food coloring (a mix of red and yellow, or an orange shade), just enough to tint orange
- Carrot greens (or parsley sprigs, or frosting that you've colored green), to add the carrot tops

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1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9x9-inch square or 9-inch round cake pan. Line with parchment paper, butter the parchment, and flour the pan, tapping out excess.
 2. Place the pecans on a small baking sheet and toast for 6 to 8 minutes, until fragrant and turning golden brown. Let cool, then coarsely chop.
 3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the oil, sugars, eggs, and vanilla. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg, ginger, cloves, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients until thoroughly combined. Stir in the carrots, raisins, and toasted pecans.

4. Spread the batter in the prepared pan and bake for 45 to 50 minutes, until the top springs back when touched, the cake is turning brown around the edges, and a toothpick comes out dry. Cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then invert onto a cooling rack, peel off parchment, and let cool completely. When cooled, invert onto a serving platter.
5. To make the frosting: Put the cream cheese in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or a mixing bowl if using a hand mixer). Cream the cream cheese until very smooth, then add the butter, confectioners' sugar, maple syrup, and vanilla. Beat until well combined and fluffy.
6. Set aside about 1/2 cup of frosting and tint it orange using a combo of red and yellow food coloring or an orange shade. Spread the white frosting over the top of the cake almost to the edges.
7. Use a piping bag fitted with a small plain tip to pipe little squiggles of orange around the edges of the cake or to pipe on mini carrots (see the "tips + subs" section for more information). Or use an offset spatula to layer on the orange frosting in the shape of a carrot. Use carrot greens to top the carrot(s). Store in the refrigerator until ready to serve.