

CARDAMOM CARROT CAKE WITH WALNUTS AND ZANTE CURRANTS

INGREDIENTS

for the cake

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 cup granulated sugar
4 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 cup orange juice
1 cup olive oil
1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest
4 cups (1 pound) carrots, peeled and finely grated
2/3 cup dried currants (soaked in warm rum (or water) for 10 minutes and drained)
2/3 cup chopped pecans, toasted

for the frosting

1 package cream cheese, not "refrigerator cold", but below room temperature
3 cups powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon table salt
1/3 cup heavy cream
decorations: additional chopped walnuts or marzipan/fondant/sugar carrots

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350F. Prepare a 2 9-inch cake pans (or a dough high 9-inch spring form pan) with baking spray and flour.

In a work bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, salt, cardamom and nutmeg. In the work bowl of your stand mixer, affixed with the paddle attachment, beat together the eggs, sugar and vanilla, until the mixture is pale and ribbony, about 2 minutes. Reduce speed to medium and slowly beat in the orange juice, olive oil and orange zest until smooth. Add the flour mixture and fold until almost incorporated. Add the carrots, currants and walnuts, and continue folding until just incorporated. Do not overmix, or the cake will be stiff. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 60 to 70 minutes until golden and a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from oven and let cool for 15 minutes. Unmold and place on a cooling rack. Let cool to room temperature.

To make the frosting, in the work bowl of your stand mixer, combine cream cheese, vanilla, salt and heavy cream until blended. Add in the powdered sugar, one cup at a time, and beat until smooth. Chill for a few minutes as you prepare your cake.

If you have made one, double high cake, you will need to cut in half vertically. Place one round on a serving platter, put about 1/2 cup frosting on top and spread to the edges. Top with second round and frost remaining cake. Decorate with additional walnuts or marzipan/fondant/sugar carrots. Chill until ready to serve.