

Carrot Cake with Cream Cheese Icing

Cake:

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
2/3 cup butter, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 large eggs
2/3 cup skim milk
1 cup shredded carrot, firmly packed
(About 3 medium, washed and peeled)
¼ cup chopped walnuts (About 1-ounce)

Icing:

½ cup butter, softened
8 ounces reduced fat cream cheese, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 ½ cups confectioners' sugar, sifted

Topping:

¼ cup finely chopped walnuts (about 1-ounce)
2 Tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar

Garnish:

1 carrot
3 mint leaves

Prepare Cake:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Spray a 9-inch round cake pan with non-stick cooking spray. Trace the bottom of a 9-inch round layer pan onto wax paper. Cut out the circle with a kitchen shears and place it in the bottom of the pan. Set aside.
3. In a 1-quart mixing bowl mix the flour, cinnamon, baking powder and salt together. Set aside.
4. In a 2 1/2-quart mixing bowl beat butter, sugar and vanilla at medium speed with an electric mixer until light and fluffy.
5. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition.
6. At low speed with the electric mixer, alternately beat flour mixture and milk into the butter mixture.
7. Stir in carrots and nuts.
8. Pour the batter into the prepared pan.
9. Bake 35 to 40 minutes until the top springs back when lightly touched and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
10. Transfer the pan to a cooling rack for 10 minutes.
11. Loosen the sides of the cake and turn the cake out of the pan onto a cooling rack, remove wax paper. Cool completely.

Prepare the Icing: Beat the butter and cream cheese in a 2 1/2-quart mixing bowl with an electric mixer. Beat in the vanilla. Gradually beat in the confectioners' sugar until well blended. Set aside. Chill slightly if desired.

Prepare the Topping: Combine the nuts and brown sugar in a 2-cup mixing bowl. Set aside.

Assembly: When the cake is cooled, transfer to a 12-inch round plate with the flat side up. Frost the sides of the cake and the top with half of the frosting. Sprinkle the top portion of the cake with the topping evenly ½-inch from the top edge. Place the remaining frosting in a decorator frosting bag with a tip and create a decorative border along the top edge of the cake and the bottom edge where the cake meets the plate. Add a decorative frosting design in the center of the cake as a focal point.

Garnish: Create decorative carrot cuts and mint leaves as desired for the garnish.