

Better-For-You Carrot Cake

with Coconut Cashew Frosting



Yield:

Makes one 8 x 8-inch cake, about 9 pieces

Tips:

- For best results, grate the carrots over the small holes of a box grater for skinnier strands that bake up more quickly in the oven.
- When shopping for flour, look for whole-grain Einkorn all-purpose flour (Jovial is a brand I like), or white whole wheat flour. Both provide more flavor and fiber than all-purpose white.
- Make it gluten-free: Swap in a cup of oat flour for the Einkorn flour and ¼ cup of flaxseed meal for ¼ cup of the almond flour.
- Make sure your ground ginger and cinnamon are fresh for a vibrantly-spiced cake.
- The coconut cashew frosting will seem thin, but it thickens once chilled. Keep in the fridge until the cake is cool enough to frost.
- Don't forget to soak the cashews for the frosting before you start on the cake. If you do forget, though, use my almost-instant method: Combine cashews and enough water to cover in a small saucepan; bring to a boil, cover, and set away from the heat for 15 minutes. Drain.

Better-For-You Carrot Cake

Olive oil spray

2 large eggs

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

⅓ cup pure maple syrup

¼ cup unsweetened, unflavored almond, cashew, oat, or other plant milk

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

½ teaspoon almond extract

1 cup finely ground almond flour

1 cup whole grain Einkorn or white whole wheat flour

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground ginger

½ teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon kosher salt

2 packed cups grated carrots (from 4 large, about 12 oz)

¼ cup dried currants, raisins, blueberries or cranberries

½ cup toasted walnuts or pecans, chopped (plus ½ cup more if using as a topping)

Coconut Cashew Frosting and Assembly

1 cup raw cashews, soaked for at least 1 hour and drained

½ cup light coconut milk

1 to 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

½ cup toasted coconut flakes or chopped walnuts, for topping

Preheat your oven to 350° F with a rack set in the center position. Line an 8x8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper overhanging on two sides, and spray it with olive oil.

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, oil, maple syrup, milk, and vanilla and almond extracts until frothy and slightly thickened.

In a separate large bowl, stir together the almond flour, Einkorn flour, cinnamon, ginger, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Fold the dry ingredients into the wet ones and stir until only a few streaks of flour remain. Fold in the carrots, currants, and walnuts until just combined.

Pour the cake batter into the prepared pan and bake until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean, the top springs back when you touch it, and the surface is golden, 30 to 40 minutes.

While the cake bakes, make the frosting. Combine the cashews, coconut milk, 1 tablespoon maple syrup, lemon juice and kosher salt in a blender; blend on high until completely smooth, about 1 minute. Taste; you may want to blend in an additional tablespoon of maple syrup. Chill in the refrigerator until ready to use.

When the cake is completely cool, run a knife along the sides of the pan and lift it onto a plate using the parchment flaps. Invert it onto another plate and peel off the parchment. Invert it back to its plate. Pour the chilled frosting over the center, using a spoon or offset spatula to spread it evenly atop, allowing some to drip down the sides of the cake.

Top with toasted coconut (bake at 325°F until golden brown, 5 to 10 minutes) or chopped walnuts.