

Kentucky Carrot Cake

Here's a recipe for a decadent fruity carrot cake, with bourbon in both the batter and the frosting. You have to use full-fat cream cheese here because lowfat won't hold its shape. This delicious cake will be eaten in no time, but if you do have any leftovers, keep them refrigerated so the frosting stays fresh. The frosting quantity here gives enough to fill and top the cake. If you want to cover the sides as well, increase the quantities by half again.

SERVES 8 TO 10

For the cake

½ cup Jim Beam® Bourbon
¾ cup (not packed) golden raisins
1¾ cups all-purpose flour
2¾ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
small pinch of salt
1 cup packed dark brown sugar
2¼ cups coarsely grated carrots
½ cup coarsely chopped pecans
finely grated zest of 1 large orange, divided
¾ cup sunflower oil
3 eggs, lightly beaten

For the frosting

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
1½ cups confectioners' sugar
3 tablespoons Jim Beam® Bourbon
7 oz. full-fat cream cheese
reserved orange zest (see instructions)
2 tablespoons pecans, chopped, to decorate

- ★ To make the cake, pour the bourbon into a small saucepan and add the golden raisins. Heat gently, without allowing the liquid to come to a boil, for 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.
- ★ Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line the bottoms of two 8-inch round cake pans with nonstick parchment paper.
- ★ Sift together the flour, baking powder, and cinnamon into a large bowl. Mix in the salt, sugar, carrots, and nuts, and approximately two-thirds of the orange zest (reserve the rest for the frosting). Add the oil, eggs, and soaked golden raisins, along with any bourbon left in the pan, and mix thoroughly.
- ★ Divide the batter equally between the prepared cake pans and gently level off the tops. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until risen and a skewer inserted in the center of each cake comes out clean. Transfer to a rack to cool in the pans for 5 minutes, then invert the cakes onto the rack to cool completely.
- ★ For the frosting, put the butter and confectioners' sugar into a mixing bowl and use a handheld electric mixer to beat them together until smooth. Now gradually beat in the bourbon. Add the cream cheese and reserved orange zest and whisk until smooth.
- ★ When the cakes are completely cold, place one cake layer on a cake board or serving plate and top with half the frosting. Level the frosting using a metal spatula, covering the entire top surface of the cake. Align the second cake on top, then scrape the remaining frosting onto it, smoothing it out to an even thickness. Sprinkle the frosting with the chopped pecans to finish.

DESSERTS

