

Virgin Vegetarian

Carrot and cranberry tray bake



I love making this cake as it is so easy. Just 2 bowls, one dry and one wet mix, then toss it all in together. When I had bad days, where patience wore thin, the aromas of this fantastic gâteau quickly pervaded all parts of the house and quickly loads of smiley faces appeared in the kitchen. Sometimes the cake was gobbled down too quickly before I could put the icing and decorations on, but the days when I managed to prevent people eating the cake immediately, the result proved delicious and was quickly devoured by all.

Preparation time	Cooking time	Diet
less than 30 mins	1 to 2 hours	Vegetarian
Pre-heat oven	Grease and line	Portions
180C/170C Fan/Gas 4.	A deep, 37cm x 28cm tin lined with baking paper	Serves 16-20

Ingredients

Carrot cake

8 free-range eggs, at room temperature
 400ml/14fl oz vegetable or sunflower oil
 500g/18oz carrots, coarsely grated
 200g/7oz cranberries
 400g/14oz self-raising flour
 5 tsp mixed spice
 2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
 ½ tsp fine salt
 400g/14oz light brown sugar

Cream cheese icing

150g/5½oz unsalted butter, softened
 3 tbsp caster sugar
 300g/10½oz full-fat cream cheese, at room temperature
 200g/7oz walnut pieces for decoration

Method

Step 1

Preheat the oven

Step 2

Wet mix

In a large bowl, break the eggs and whisk lightly. Add the oil. Stir in the grated carrots and raisins.

Step 3

Dry mix

In the second bowl sift the flour, mixed spice, bicarbonate of soda and salt. Stir in the sugar.

Step 4

Mix together

Mix the wet mix into the dry mix, and stir together ensuring all the ingredients are mixed together evenly.

Step 5

Grease and line the tin.

Step 6

Spoon the batter into the tin. Bake on the middle shelf for 1–1¼ hours. The cake will be ready when it has risen and is golden-brown all over. Check with a skewer if the cake is cooked. If not leave for another 10minute interval, until the cake has been cooked all the way through.

Step 7

Get the cake out the oven and leave to cool for 10-15mins. Take out of the tin and cool on a wire rack to cool completely.

Step 8

To make the icing, place the softened butter in a large bowl with the sugar. Beat together for 2–3 minutes until light and creamy. Mix in the cream cheese until smooth.

Step 9

Spread the icing onto the cake using a flat knife. Scatter the walnuts on to decorate.

Enjoy!

Tips

Do not attempt to ice the cake until it is totally cool, or else the icing will melt and slide off the cake!

The carrot cake can keep for a week at a moderate room temperature in an airtight container, but if needed can be frozen for up to a month. Once you have iced the cake, it needs to be kept chilled, such as in the fridge.