

# BUSYCOOK

## Carrot and cake

Hard to believe, but it's healthy

ONE of Australia's top chefs told me last week: "Cooking is artistic and creative. Baking is physics and chemistry."

What he means, of course, is you can add or subtract ingredients when you are stir-frying or roasting with no great harm, but when it comes to cakes and biscuits, you'd better follow the recipe to the last milligramme.

That's also why I write about cooking more than baking. Baking is a precise science and so many things can go wrong - from baking powder that's old and flat to the size of eggs available.

But today, I have to share this carrot cake recipe with you. It's great tasting, almost flop-proof and it's good for you, to boot.

Carrots are great vegetables, full of beta carotene and vitamins and they are available all year through. They're very affordable as well. This cake uses a whole packet of the young carrots you can buy for less than two bucks at the supermarkets.

What perks this cake up is the addition of two big spoons of grated ginger. Chose ginger that's not too old and stringy. But, don't use young ginger. They don't have the bite we need.

The oil used in this recipe is canola, the only oil I know that whips up so well in cakes. As you beat the eggs into the canola and sugar mixture, you'll notice that it will turn creamy. That's the oil and egg emulsifying, like a mayonnaise.

This is not a light cake, and it has an almost pudding-like texture.



But don't worry about it. The taste and texture makes it good hot or cold.

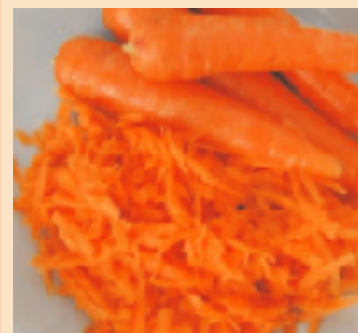
If you like it plain, the cake is good served warm. Just warm it in the microwave again, one minute on high.

But for me, the frosting is, well, icing on the cake. I use a mixture of cream cheese and butter. Because I only use one cup of icing sugar, the frosting is softer, and will not be as stiff as the store-bought versions.

I'm trying to reduce my sweet tooth, like most other increasingly health-conscious cooks. To compensate, however, I do add a spoonful of marmalade to take away the tartness of the cream cheese. Just add any jam you have lying around, but stay away from strongly coloured ones. The frosting should stay pale.

This is a great cake and pretty easy to do, if you remember to take it in stages - dry ingredients, oil, sugar and eggs, and finally the carrots, ginger and nuts. Happy baking.

### TIPS & TRICKS



CARROTS are great advertisers. They really shout about their nutrition value with a traffic stopping orange. What it means is that they are an excellent source of Vitamin A - good to know if you are a chronic myopic, like me.

#### BETA CAROTENE

Carrots are a good source of beta carotene. So what is beta carotene and what does it do for you? Beta-carotene promotes growth and repair of body tissue, healthy eyes, good night vision and a strong immune system.

#### CARROT ANAEMIA

In all things, practise moderation. I once knew a lady who drank so much carrot juice, her palms turned yellow. That was when we first heard of carrot anaemia.

But thankfully, it's not common. But please note that Vitamin A can be toxic in large doses, and when taken excessively during pregnancy, may not be good for baby.

But on the whole, carrots are still good for you, and a handful of carrot sticks is a lot healthier than salty snacks or sweet pastries. One or two baby carrots served with a school lunch or an office lunchbox will also take care of your recommended daily dosage of Vitamin A.

Or a slice of our wonderful carrot cake.



by Pauline D Loh

pauline@newstoday.com.sg

### Carrot Ginger Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting

#### Cake Ingredients:

- 3 cups carrots, peeled and grated
- 2 tablespoons peeled and minced fresh ginger
- 1 cup walnuts, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup red glace cherries, quartered

- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

- 1 1/2 cup canola oil
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup brown sugar

#### Frosting Ingredients:

- 1 packet (8 oz) cream cheese
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1 cup icing sugar
- 8 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon marmalade

#### Make the cake:

1. Peel and grate carrots. Peel and grate ginger. Chop walnuts. Cut cherries. Pre-heat oven to 180 deg C.
2. Mix plain flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon powder together with a fork. Set aside.
3. In a large mixing bowl, beat canola oil

and sugar together, until sugar dissolves.

4. Add eggs and beat well. (The mixture will emulsify, like a dark mayonnaise.)
  5. Slowly add in flour mixture, mix well but do not overbeat.
  6. Add grated carrots, walnut, ginger and cherries. Mix well. Pour cake mixture into two loaf pans or a loaf pan and a 10-inch round cake pan.
  7. Bake for 35 minutes or longer until test skewer comes out clean. Cool cake.
  8. While cake is baking, prepare frosting. Beat butter, cream cheese, maple syrup and icing sugar together. Stir in the spoonful of marmalade. Cool in fridge.
  9. When cakes are cooled, cover with cream cheese frosting and decorate with walnuts or pecan halves.
- (Total cooking time: 1 hour. Cake keeps three days if refrigerated. Makes two loaves or one loaf and a round cake.)

#### Baking tips:

Ovens vary, so if you have a cooler oven, adjust the cooking time. Cake is cooked if a bamboo skewer inserted into centre comes out clean and not sticky. Remember to buy the plain cream cheese and not the flavoured spreads. They now come in tubs, or blocks. I prefer the tubs in case there is left-over cheese which I can keep for a sandwich.

