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A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul.

February 2019

SMALL CAKES; LARGE FAMILY PLEASURES

Almond Oat Cake

Carrot Cake

Lady Baltimore Cake

Nutmeg Cake

The Perfect Fudgy "Amazing" Pudding Cake

When we first married, cake decorating classes were the big "what to do with your spare time" homemaker thing. It seems to me to be a 1960s resurrection of the "home bureau" classes my mother attended during the war years and into the 1950s. Mom made Lucite relish dishes and lamp shades; every week there was another practical project. During the 1960s several of my friends spent hours decorating cardboard templates and cakes to practice the skills they had learned at their cake decorating classes. It must still be going on since craft stores have special aisles devoted to cake decorating accessories. I never felt the urge to decorate but I often feel the urge to eat cake, generally unfrosted.

Once we downsized I found myself rarely baking cakes. Most of my cake recipes called for nine-inch cake pans, 8-inch square baking pans, or, in the case of my carrot cake, a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan. After a few days we were tired of cake and the cake was drying out to the point it was unappealing. Two people don't need that much cake. When you downsize, you don't have to settle for cupcakes or buy those sugary cake slices in the bakery departments of the grocery stores but downsizing cake recipes can be somewhat tricky. Your liquid-to-dry ingredient ratio often has to be adjusted as you cut the recipe and the baking period always has to be adjusted. Sometimes it takes several tries to get things right.

It is theorized that cake evolved from breads soon after our ancestors planted and harvested wheat and used that wheat to make flour. Those sweet breads/cakes were generally small, heavy, honey sweetened rounds, more like a biscuit or a cookie. The word cake evolves from Old Norse which suggests that the Norsemen were baking a sweet



bread. The cake as we know it today, made with the highly refined cake flour and baking powder instead of yeast, appeared in the middle of the 1800s and until the 1930s people baked cakes and improved recipes—creativity was at its peak. Then, came the Depression and the response to convenience demands changed everything. Through the war years, when ingredients were rationed and women were working, commercially-available food mixes gained enormous traction.

Custard powders were probably the first boxed mixes. They appeared in England in the 1840s. Gelatin dessert mixes appeared in the late 1800s. A boxed ginger cake mix was introduced in 1932, during the Depression, by Hills Brothers Company under the Dromedary label. The name was subsequently changed to Dromedary Gingerbread Mix and was a standby for decades. When I asked my mother for her gingerbread recipe, she said she had been using the one with the camel in the advertisements so long she didn't know if she still had the family

gingerbread recipe. Indeed, I never found it. The introduction of cake mixes took off after World War II when the idea was pounced upon by companies such as General Mills who soon marketed “Betty Crocker PartyCake mixes” in spice, yellow, and white varieties. Duff, Proctor and Gamble under the Duncan Hines label, and Py-O-My also gained national acceptance by homemakers who wanted the convenience. Soon a variety of chocolate cakes, marble cake, angel food cake, and coffeecakes were available.

Commercial cake mixes make too large a cake for the downsized family so if you want a cake for dinner you can certainly justify going full circle back “to scratch.” There are no hard and fast rules but the flour you choose can make a significant difference in the texture of a cake. My recipes generally call for unbleached white flour and whole wheat flour. The ratio of white flour to whole wheat flour is something you really have to work out by experimentation—too much whole wheat flour and you are back to the density of the ancients or the hippie cakes of the 1970s. Cake flour is another choice for all or part of the flour in a cake. It has a high starch-to-gluten ratio, the result of the soft, low-protein wheat from which it is milled. Cake flour gives a lighter texture to baked products but one has to consider the

downside of using this flour. Cake flour is highly processed, low in protein, and it is heavily bleached to give baked products a very white appearance, such as angel food cakes and the Lady Baltimore cake included here.



The following cake, certainly a coffeecake by our definition today, is perhaps similar to the early cakes referenced above.

ALMOND OAT CAKE

TPT - about 47 minutes

Equally as enjoyable for breakfast or dessert, this has been one of our very most favorite picnic choices since the 1970s. During the 1970s I used only whole wheat and soy flours for this cake. I've mellowed, I guess.

- 1/4 cup sifted whole wheat flour**
- 2 tablespoons unbleached white flour**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons soy flour**
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder**
- 2 1/2 tablespoons sugar**

- 2 tablespoons cold butter**

- 2 tablespoons fat-free pasteurized eggs**
- 1/4 cup two-percent milk**
- 1/2 teaspoon pure almond extract**
- 1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- 1/4 cup rolled oats—quick or old-fashioned, but not instant**

- 1 tablespoon slivered, unblanched, additive-free almonds**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. F. Prepare a **6-inch cake pan** by coating with non-stick lecithin spray coating for baking.

In a mixing bowl, combine whole wheat and soy flours, baking powder, and sugar. Sift together into a second bowl.

Using a pastry blender, cut the *cold* butter into the dry ingredients until the texture resembles that of coarse corn meal.

Add egg, milk, and almond and vanilla extracts. Mix thoroughly after addition of all three ingredients. Stir in oats.

Pour batter into prepared cake pan, spreading evenly. Sprinkle slivered almonds over. Bake in preheated 350 degree F. oven for 20 minutes, or until *golden brown*. Cool on wire rack for 5 minutes. Remove from pan and *serve warm*, if possible.

Yields 4 servings
adequate for 2 people

Note: Although this is best served immediately from the oven, it may be reheated in a 300 degree F. oven for about 15 minutes, if necessary.



1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 4.3 g.; FAT = 7.3 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 23.9 g.;
CALORIES = 180; CALORIES FROM FAT = 37%

CARROT CAKE

Aargauer Rubli Torte

TPT - 1 hour and 50 minutes;
1 hour = cooling period

Although carrots have been baked into cakes and tortes for centuries, the resurgence of popularity in the 1960s set us off testing and tasting. The Swiss carrot cake that appears on p. 420 of volume I of "A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul" is the best carrot cake we have ever tried—moist and sweet, but the recipe produces a 13 x 9 x 2-inch cake, much more carrot cake than a small family needs.



**3/4 cup finely grated, not shredded, carrots—about
1/4 pound trimmed and peeled medium carrots**

**6 tablespoons unbleached white flour
2 tablespoons whole wheat flour
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground mace *or* nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/8 teaspoon salt**

**1/4 cup fat-free pasteurized eggs (the equivalent
of 1 egg)
1/3 cup white sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
1/4 cup light vegetable oil—our choice is sunflower oil
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated organic orange zest**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Prepare a **6-inch cake pan** by coating with non-stick lecithin spray coating.

Sift white and whole wheat flours, ground cinnamon and mace, baking soda, baking powder, and salt into a mixing bowl. Set aside until required.

Using an electric mixer, beat pasteurized eggs *briefly* until well-mixed. Add grated carrots, white and brown sugars, oil, vanilla extract, and grated orange zest. Beat until thoroughly blended. Add sifted flour and spice mixture. Beat at *LOW* speed until moistened—*do not overbeat*.*

Turn into prepared baking pan, spreading evenly to the sides.

Bake in preheated 325 degree F, oven for about 25-30 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Cake should spring back when pressed with your finger. Transfer to a wire rack and allow to cool completely—at least 1 hour.

Serve with a cream cheese sauce or, if preferred, just sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.

Yields 6 servings

Note: *If desired, a couple of tablespoonfuls of chopped, *preservative-free* nuts—walnuts, black walnuts, or hazelnuts—may be added at this point as may *preservative-free* dark raisins or currants.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 2.5 g.; FAT = 9.0 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 18.5 g.;
CALORIES = 197; CALORIES FROM FAT = 41%

LADY BALTIMORE CAKE

TPT - 1 hour

Often called "White Cake," "Silver Cake," or "Snow Cake," Lady Baltimore Cake is our all-time favorite cake for its incomparable taste and exquisite texture. It is believed to have originated in Baltimore, Maryland, but the origins are not certain. It does, however, appear in some of the oldest Colonial cookbooks in America. Classic Lady Baltimore filling/frosting, a very sweet mixture of boiled frosting, dried figs, raisins, pecans, and cognac, may be chosen out of deference to tradition. If you choose to use the traditional frosting with this small cake, just spread a layer on top. The authentic filling frosting is too sweet for our taste. I occasionally frost this cake with a white buttercream frosting for a special occasion but powdered sugar and/or a fruit sauce or coffee ice cream would generally be my choices. This was also my favorite birthday cake and I often choose it today for a special Christmas dessert. A tiny candy cane nestled into white frosting is dramatic!!

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sifted cake flour
1 1/4 teaspoons baking powder

**3 tablespoons butter—sweet (*unsalted*) or
lightly salted, as preferred—*softened to
room temperature***

4 1/2 tablespoons sugar

3 tablespoons skimmed milk

3 tablespoons water

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon pure almond extract

2 large egg whites

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Prepare a **6-inch cake pan** by coating with non-stick lecithin spray coating.

Into a mixing bowl, sift cake flour and baking powder. Set aside.

Using an electric mixer or food processor fitted with steel knife, cream butter until light and fluffy. Add sugar, *a tablespoonful at a time*, and continue creaming thoroughly until again light and fluffy.

In a measuring cup, combine milk and water with vanilla and almond extracts.

While continuing to beat creamed mixture, alternately add sifted flour mixture and combined liquids, beating very well after each addition.

Using an electric mixer fitted with *grease-free* beaters or by hand, using a *grease-free* wire whisk, beat egg whites in a *grease-free* bowl until *stiff*, but *not dry*. *Whisk-fold* beaten egg whites *gently*, but *thoroughly*, into batter. Turn batter into prepared cake pan.

Bake in preheated 375-degree F. oven for 20 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean.

Cool completely on a wire rack before removing from pans. Sprinkle with powdered sugar, use as base for a fruit or dessert sauce, or frost with frosting of choice. Transfer to a serving plate.

Yields 6 servings

Notes: This cake freezes well.

This batter is perfect for making eleven small cakes or tartlets. Bake for about 9-10 minutes. Cool slightly before removing from tart pans.

Use a 9-inch cake pan if doubling.



1/6 SERVING (cake without frosting) –
PROTEIN = 2.8 g.; FAT = 5.9 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 22.4 g.;
CALORIES = 155; CALORIES FROM FAT = 34%

1/11 SERVING (i. e., per tartlet) –
PROTEIN = 1.5 g.; FAT = 3.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 12.2 g.;
CALORIES = 84; CALORIES FROM FAT = 34%

NUTMEG CAKE

TPT - 1 hour and 27 minutes;
45 minutes = cooling period

I visited a restored pre-Revolutionary home on Long Island and discovered the spice safe that had belonged to the Lloyds had been found and returned to the restored kitchen. It still smelled faintly of the cinnamon sticks and whole nutmegs that had been stored under lock and key by the mistress of the house. The aroma of nutmeg seems to take me to the autumns of my youth in upstate New York and the dessert buffet table at my grandmother's each Christmas. Cooks are so fortunate today not to have to wait for a trade ship to come in from the East Indies; we can find ground or whole nutmegs at any grocery store. This means, of course, that this lovely, moist little cake can be the centerpiece of our tea tray on an inauspicious Thursday; we need not wait for holidays.

3/4 cup cake flour
3/4 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon freshly grated nutmeg

1/3 cup skimmed milk
1/2 teaspoon distilled white vinegar

1/4 cup butter—softened to room temperature

1/2 cup sugar

6 tablespoons fat-free pasteurized eggs (the equivalent of 1 egg)

1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

BROWN SUGAR–CHEESE FROSTING:

1/2 cup *mascarpone* cheese

2 tablespoon *light* brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

**1-2 teaspoons light cream *or* half and half,
to thin, as necessary**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Prepare a **6-inch cake pan** by lining with waxed paper and then coating with spray coating especially for baking.

In a mixing bowl, combine cake flour, baking powder, and grated nutmeg. Mix well to combine. Set aside until required.

In a measuring cup, combine milk and vinegar. Mix well. Set aside until required.

Using the electric mixer fitted with a paddle, cream butter until light and fluffy.

Add sugar and beat until again light and fluffy.

Add pasteurized eggs and vanilla extract. Beat until well-combined.

Add flour mixture alternately with milk–vinegar mixture, beating after each addition. Turn batter into prepared baking pan. Smooth to the edge of the pan. Bake in prepared 350-degree F. oven for 30 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Allow to cool completely on a wire rack before frosting—at least 45 minutes—if you choose to frost.

Using the electric mixer fitted with paddle, cream *mascarpone* cheese in a clean mixer bowl until light and fluffy.

Add brown sugar and vanilla extract. Beat until again light and fluffy.

Teaspoonful by teaspoonful beat in cream until frosting mixture is of spreadable consistency. Scrape down sides of bowl as necessary. Frost cake when completely cooled.

Yields 6 servings

Note: This recipe can be doubled and prepared in an 8-inch square baking pan.

1/6 SERVING (exclusive of frosting) –
PROTEIN = 3.2 g.; FAT = 7.9 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 23.9 g.;
CALORIES = 178; CALORIES FROM FAT = 40%

1/6 SERVING (with frosting) –
PROTEIN = 3.5 g.; FAT = 10.0 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 28.5 g.;
CALORIES = 223; CALORIES FROM FAT = 40%





THE PERFECT FUDGY “AMAZING” PUDDING CAKE

TPT - 42 minutes

British comedies seem to find inexhaustible humor in fathers as dentists and mothers who are dismal cooks. One of our favorites centered on a homemaker whose traditional British noon-time puddings were candidates for pothole repair. The joke never seemed to wear thin with the sitcom writers while most of the viewers were screaming “Serve fruit, you twit.” This recipe which looks like an unholy mess when it goes into the oven turns magically into a chocolate brownie-like cake/pudding with gooey pockets of a thick pudding-like chocolate sauce. Its preparation is akin to that for “impossible” pies and “chemistry class” cakes and, as such, is fascinating to me and fun for anyone to bake. He with whom I have traveled this life is often heard to say, “How about a dish of goo?” If you love puds, as do I, and the occasional dish of decadent goo, this pud does qualify as good goo . . . well, just try it and you will see what I mean.

2/3 cup unbleached white flour
2/3 cup white sugar
3 tablespoons Dutch-processed dark cocoa powder
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt

5 tablespoons fat-free pasteurized eggs
1/4 cup melted butter
5 tablespoons two-percent milk
3/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

3 tablespoons Dutch-processed dark cocoa powder
1/2 cup light brown sugar
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons boiling water

Sweetened whipped cream, for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a mixing bowl, combine flour, white sugar, 3 tablespoonfuls cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt. Stir to mix well.

Add pasteurized eggs, *melted* butter, milk, and vanilla extract. Stir to combine thoroughly. Pour into ungreased **7-inch cake pan**.

In a glass measuring cup, combine remaining 3 tablespoonfuls cocoa powder, brown sugar, and *boiling* water. Stir well until sugar is dissolved and cocoa has been integrated thoroughly. Pour mixture evenly over cake mixture in cake pan. **DO NOT STIR**. Bake in preheated 350 degree F. oven for 30 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean.*

Serve immediately into soup plates, in wedges if you can manage them. Spoon gooey sauce over each serving. Garnish with sweetened whipped cream or ice cream, if preferred.

Refrigerate leftovers.**

Yields 6 servings

Notes: *Baking time is crucial with this dessert. If it is left in the oven too long the pudding sauce can burn and the cake will become dry.

**A leftover cake is really delicious the next day since the sauce is absorbed into the cake rendering the leftover cake as moist as it was the day before.

1/6 SERVING (exclusive of whipped cream) –
PROTEIN = 4.8 g.; FAT = 9.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 57.0 g.;
CALORIES = 323; CALORIES FROM FAT = 25%

By today's standards, I guess we splurged this month!!

*Next month I want to introduce the Beluga black lentil
to those of you who have never cooked with this beautiful legume.*

Please drop by,

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.

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