Two Cakes - Carrot Cake and Lemon Cake, with Cream Cheese Frosting

On Sunday we're going to bake cakes!! I'm going to show you how to make two kinds — carrot and lemon — and you can make either, or both! Both recipes can be baked in a Bundt pan, a 9x13-inch pan or as layers for a layer cake, and both carrot and lemon cakes are delicious with cream cheese frosting! You could also leave them plain, or try a different kind of frosting!

Sunday, January 30, 10 AM MT
Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83979129580?pwd=SXl5TzJHbzFkcUE5WlB6Tjd1ZExtZz09

My Dad's Favourite Carrot Cake

I've been making this carrot cake for my dad for ages! It's easy to mix together, and you can bake it as a Bundt cake (which I usually do) or as layers, or even as cupcakes. If you bake the batter as cupcakes, fill paper-lined muffin tins and bake for 25-30 minutes, or until they're domed and springy to the touch.

3 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups sugar (all white, all brown, or half and half)
1 Tbsp baking soda
2 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp fine salt
1 cup canola oil
4 large eggs
1 Tbsp grated fresh or 2 tsp dried ginger
1 Tbsp vanilla
2 packed cups coarsely grated carrots (about 3 carrots)
1 cup applesauce (sweetened or unsweetened)
1 cup chopped walnuts, pecans, raisins, or dried cranberries, or a combination of dried fruit and nuts (optional)

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Spray a Bundt pan or two 9-inch round cake pans with nonstick spray.

In a large bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. In a smaller bowl, stir together the oil, eggs, ginger and vanilla. Add the oil mixture, grated carrots and applesauce to the dry ingredients and stir by hand until almost combined. Add the nuts and dried fruit (if you're using them) and stir just until the batter is blended.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan(s). Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes for a Bundt cake, or for 40-45 minutes for layer cakes, until the tops are cracked and springy to the touch and the edges are pulling away from the sides of the pan.

Cool the cake(s) in the pan for 10-15 minutes, then loosen the edge with a knife, and invert onto a wire rack to cool completely. If you decide to frost the cake, make sure it's completely cool first, or the frosting will melt and slide down the sides.

Makes 1 cake, serves about 16.

Lemon Cake

This lemony cake can be baked as layers or a single 9x13-inch or Bundt cake. You could even bake it as cupcakes—divide the batter between paper-lined muffin tins and bake for about 20 minutes, or until golden, domed and springy to the touch.

3/4 cup canola or other mild vegetable oil
1 3/4 cups sugar (divided)
finely grated zest and juice of 2 lemons (divided)
4 large eggs
1 tsp vanilla
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp fine salt
1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

In a large bowl, beat the oil, 1 1/2 cups of the sugar and lemon zest for about a minute with hand mixers (or in a stand mixer), or mix vigorously by hand. Beat in the eggs and vanilla. In a smaller bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add about a third of the dry ingredients to the oil-sugar mixture, stirring or beating on low speed just until combined. Add half the milk in the same way, then another third of the dry ingredients, the rest of the milk, and then the rest of the dry ingredients, stirring or beating on low speed just until combined.

Pour the batter into a well-sprayed Bundt pan or 9x13-inch pan, or divide it between two greased 9-inch cake pans. Bake for 30-35 minutes for round layers or a 9x13-inch cake, or an hour for a Bundt, until the cake is golden and springy to the touch.

Meanwhile, bring the lemon juice to a simmer with the remaining 1/4 cup sugar and cook for a minute, until the sugar has dissolved. After the cake cools for about 15 minutes, poke all over its surface with a wooden skewer and brush or drizzle the syrup over the cake. Let cool completely before frosting.

Makes 1 cake.

Cream Cheese Frosting

Though we often think of cream cheese frosting for carrot cakes, it's also delicious on lemon, spice and even chocolate cakes.

1/2 cup butter, softened
1 pkg cream cheese, softened
3 cups icing sugar
1 Tbsp milk, cream or lemon juice (or water)
1/2 tsp vanilla (optional)

In a large bowl, beat the butter and cream cheese until smooth and creamy. Add about half the icing sugar and the liquid (milk, cream, lemon juice or water) and vanilla and beat until creamy. Add more icing sugar until you have a smooth, spreadable frosting. (You can adjust the texture by adding a bit more sugar or liquid as needed, but be careful with the liquid — you won't need much!)

Make sure the cake is cooled completely before you frost it! Makes enough for 1 layer cake or a batch of cupcakes.