

בשול עם שמחה



Gingerbread Cake (lower-fat)

People who are watching their calorie intake deal with the temptation of “cakes” in different ways.... There are the iron-willed, who never eat cake. These people have my respect - some of them can even look a raw tomato in the eye before breakfast! More commonly, we are the less iron-willed - who try not to eat cakes and sweet bakings, but sometimes enjoy one anyway. That’s cool.... What isn’t cool - is feeling guilty about it afterwards; it doesn’t change the event - and it spoils remembering a nice experience.

I cook for a house of three adults; we all like cake - and none of us can afford to be careless about what we eat. So I make cakes with less fat content, abandon icing and cream filling, and - most importantly - I try to make the basic cake so full of flavour and interesting textures that a small piece is satisfying. This way, we can all enjoy the treat, and no-one gets more than a few grams of fat or a fraction of an egg yolk.

I do use some raw sugar and treacle in cooking, where the flavour is necessary - usually about half the amount one sees in published recipes. You are welcome to use even less, or you can sometimes replace sugar with a smaller amount of liquid honey or concentrated apple juice. (Apple and apricot concentrate might go well in a fruit cake.) Also some spices can make fruit *seem* sweeter - but I’ll write about that, another time.

Here’s a delicious recipe for fruity gingerbread cake. I usually prefer Sunflower or Soya oil for sweet baking, but some recipes do taste better with butter - this is one of them. But compare that a sponge cake might have 250-300 gm of butter to 350gm flour, while this ginger cake has just 100gm butter to 350gm flour, and it’s still moist and tasty, and keeps well.

100g unsalted butter, slightly warmed and softened

100g raw sugar

350g organic flour (about 1/6 wholemeal, rest unbleached white)

1 tsp cream of tartar

2 TBS ground ginger

2 tsp ground cinnamon

3 tsp ground or grated nutmeg

A handful of sultanas or seedless raisins

3 small (No 5) free-range eggs

150ml warm CalciTrim or similar milk

1 cup NZ-type treacle

2 TBS Commandaria tonic wine (or about 3 TBS sherry or sweet red wine)

Grated rind of 1 large orange (Pref. organic orange, or thoroughly scrub under hot water, before grating)

1tsp Baking Soda

(and optional) About *50gm preserved ginger*, cut into pea-size bits plus *2-3 TBS ‘nut dust’* (mixed fresh nut bits - see footnote) for topping.

Method:

√ Grease 2x20cm baking tins. Line one tin with baking paper; keep second lining paper on bench for sifting flour. Preheat oven to 150°C fan oven (or 160°C no fan).

√ Cream softened butter and sugar together till fluffy.

√ Sift flours, tartar and spices till mixed together. (If you sift them onto the second piece of baking paper, that’s one less bowl to wash.) Small pieces of bran remaining in the sieve can be put back in, if you wish. Mix sultanas into the flour.

√ Warm milk in a small pan, add wine and treacle and stir well until treacle is completely mixed in, not sitting on the bottom of the pan. If necessary, warm the mixture a bit more until the treacle softens and mixes completely, then let the pan cool to hand temperature.

√ Beat eggs lightly and stir into cooled treacle mixture.

√ Fold flour mix, and treacle/egg mix, alternately into the butter and sugar. Beat well, and mix in the orange rind and (optionally) about half the ginger pieces.

√ Line the second cake tin with the baking paper.

√ Dissolve baking soda in 2TBS warm water, and mix very thoroughly into the cake batter.

√ Pour into two tins. Sprinkle nut bits and remaining ginger on top, and bake first for 25min @ 150°C (or 30 min @ 160°C no fan). Then turn oven down to 130°C fan-oven and bake for about 35 min (or 40 min @ 140°C no fan), until centre is springy and a skewer comes out clean. Cool slightly in the tins, then lift out with the paper. This cake shrinks slightly in baking, so it’s easy to turn out.

Serve in small pieces, alone or with unsweetened apple puree and yoghurt.

Enjoy.... Simcha