smitten kitchen It’s hardly the biggest surprise of parenting, but I’ve yet to get my head around the idea that I’ve taken part in creating a morning person. My son has always woken up early; if it’s 5/5:30am, he’s on the sofa, reading a thick book, wondering why we do not care to watch the sunrise with him. Over the years, we’ve tried everything to change his wiring — lecturing, star charts, bribery, begging, asking the pediatrician to talk some sense into him [although “he wakes up early and reads chapter books!” didn’t quite have the doom-and-gloom impact we’d thought it would], prayer — and eventually, as you might have inferred from referring to it as wiring, we gave up. When you wake up at the crack of dawn, you also require breakfast at an earlier hour than normal people, like your parents, who love to sleep. So there’s no, uh, confusion as to what is and is not a “breakfast food,” we’ve taken to packing him a breakfast and leaving it in the fridge: a hard-boiled egg, fruit, cheese, and some sort of muffin. After working my way through my own muffin archives, I realized that I was missing one of those hippie/morning glory-ish muffins that he loves, loaded with carrots and apple and dried fruit, sometimes coconut, and spices. I’ve made a few versions over the last few months, and was about to go another round when a new (out tomororw), wonderful cookbook arrived at my doorstep: Yossy Arefi’s Snacking Cakes. I probably don’t need to tell you that the idea of a snacking cake is firmly within the SK wheelhouse — I think cakes can be an everyday, just-because-it’s-Monday thing, and lucky for us, Arefi does too. I went right for the Morning Glory Cake and wondered why I’ve been fussing with muffin liners and trying to achieve the perfect dome when pouring it all in a pan is so much easier. I’ve tweaked Arefi’s recipe to make it even more breakfast-y — I lowered the sugar and oil, just a bit, swapped in whole wheat flour, raw sugar for white, added some dried fruit as well as coconut (both nods to the original\*), ginger, because I like it here, and I use some toasted, salted pepitas on top. The cake remains plush and perfect for whatever hour you call breakfast. \* Did you know that the Morning Glory muffin has an official recipe? Pam McKinstry, created them in 1978 for her restaurant on Nantucket. The recipe was first published in Gourmet in 1981, and they were wildly popular for decades.