

PUMPKIN CARROT CAKE WITH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING AND CANDIED HAZELNUTS

MAKES 12 SERVINGS

3 egg whites
1 cup unsalted butter, softened
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed brown sugar
3 egg yolks
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups canned pumpkin $1\frac{1}{2}$
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon ground ginger
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon $\frac{3}{4}$
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg + some
2 cups grated carrots $\frac{3}{4}$
1 teaspoon vanilla

CANDIED NUTS

1 cup hazelnuts, pecans, walnuts, or almonds, coarsely chopped
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 tablespoon water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cardamom
Dash ground nutmeg

FROSTING

3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, softened
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 (1-pound) package confectioners' sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and lightly flour three $8 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch round cake pans (or line bottoms of pans with parchment paper and grease the paper); set pans aside.
2. In a large mixing bowl beat the egg whites with an electric mixer until stiff peaks form. Transfer to a clean bowl and set aside. In the same large bowl combine the 1 cup butter, the $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups granulated sugar, and brown sugar and beat until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg yolks, then the pumpkin until combined. Sift together flour, the 1 tablespoon ginger, the 2 teaspoons cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cardamom, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and the $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg, sifting three times for the best volume. Gradually add the flour mixture to the butter mixture, beating on low speed just until combined. Beat in carrots and the 1 teaspoon vanilla on low speed. Gently fold in the beaten egg whites by hand.

3. Pour the batter evenly into the cake pans. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the centers comes out clean. Cool layers in pans on wire racks for 10 minutes, then turn out from pans and cool completely on wire racks. Measure the height of each layer and insert toothpicks around the side at the halfway point. Use a serrated knife to cut each layer horizontally with the toothpicks as a guide. Slide a baking sheet between the layers and carefully remove the top layer.

4. For candied nuts, in a large skillet cook the nuts over medium heat until golden brown and fragrant, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and set aside. In a large heavy saucepan combine the $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar, the 2 tablespoons butter, water, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt. Cook and stir over medium heat until sugar is dissolved and mixture begins to boil. Cook, stirring frequently, until sugar turns caramel color. Immediately remove from heat and stir in the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon, the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ginger, the $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cardamom, and the dash nutmeg. Add nuts, stirring to coat. Turn out onto a buttered baking sheet to cool. Break into small pieces and place in a resealable plastic bag. Use a rolling pin to crush the nuts.

5. For frosting, in a bowl combine cream cheese, the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, and the 2 teaspoons vanilla. Beat with electric mixer until smooth and fluffy. Beat in enough confectioners' sugar to make the frosting spreadable.

6. To frost cake, place a cake layer on a plate and spread with some frosting. Top with second layer. Repeat with remaining layers, spreading frosting between each layer. Frost top and side of cake. Press two-thirds of the candied nuts onto the side; sprinkle remaining nuts on top. Chill cake for 1 to 4 hours. Let stand at room temperature for about 1 hour before slicing.



To frost the cake easily, spoon frosting into a pastry bag (or use a 1-gallon resealable plastic bag and snip a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hole in a bottom corner). Pipe frosting onto top and side of cake, then smooth with an offset spatula.

