



Everyone's Favorite Fruitcake

"No, no, not the dreaded FRUITCAKE..." Fear not: this moist, dark cake is loaded with yummy-tasting dried fruits, not the icky, bitter candied peel and citron you remember from visiting your grandma at Christmas. The dried fruits suggested below are simply that — suggestions. Feel free to substitute your own favorites; you'll need about 2 1/2 pounds dried fruit total.

Want to make this cake gluten free? See "tips," below.

Note: This recipe was formerly named Fruitcake Even Fruitcake Non-Lovers Will Love. So if you were looking for that recipe — you've found it!

Fruit

- 1 1/2 cups diced dried pineapple
- 1 1/2 cups raisins, golden or regular
- 1 cup diced dried apricots
- 1 1/2 cups chopped dates
- heaping 1 cup candied red cherries, plus additional for decoration, if desired
- 1/3 cup diced crystallized ginger, optional
- 3/4 cup rum, brandy, apple juice, or cranberry juice

Batter

- 1 cup (16 tablespoons) unsalted butter
- 2 cups dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
- 2 tablespoons cocoa, black cocoa preferred; optional, for color
- 1/4 cup golden syrup, boiled cider, or dark corn syrup
- 1/2 cup apple juice, cranberry juice or water
- 2 cups chopped, toasted nuts (almonds, pecans, or walnuts)

Topping/glaze (optional)

- rum, brandy, simple syrup, vanilla syrup, or ginger syrup

Directions

1. To prepare the fruit: Combine the fruit with the liquid of your choice in a non-reactive bowl; cover and let rest overnight. Too impatient to wait until tomorrow? Microwave everything for 1 minute (or until it's very hot), cover, and let rest 1 hour.
2. Preheat the oven to 300°F. This recipe makes enough batter for ONE (not all!) of the following: 3 dozen individual (muffin pan) cakes; 16 mini loaves (about 3 3/4" x 2 1/2"); 6 to 8 medium loaves (about 3" x 5"); or 2 standard 9" x 5" loaves. Choose your pans (or combinations), and lightly grease them. If you're making muffin-size cakes in a standard muffin pan, line the pan with muffin papers, and lightly grease the papers.
3. To make the batter: Place the the butter and sugar in a large bowl (at least 6-quart), and beat together until well combined.
4. Beat in the salt, spices, and baking powder.
5. Beat in the eggs one at a time, scraping the bowl after each addition.
6. In a separate bowl whisk together the flour and cocoa.
7. Add the flour mixture and the syrup (or boiled cider) to the mixture in the bowl, beating gently to combine.



AT A GLANCE

PREP

30 mins. to 45 mins.

BAKE

60 mins. to 2 hrs 15 mins.

TOTAL

2 hrs 30 mins.

YIELD

36 small cakes; 2 large loaves; or anything in between

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8. Stir in the juice or water, then the fruit with any collected liquid, and the nuts. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl, and stir until everything is well combined.
 9. Spoon the batter into the pans, filling them about 3/4 full.
 10. Bake the cakes on the middle shelf of the oven, as follows: about 60 minutes for the individual cakes; 65 to 70 minutes for the small loaves; 75 minutes for the medium loaves, and 2 hours + 10 to 15 minutes for the 9" x 5" loaves. The cakes are done when a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean.
 11. Remove the cakes from the oven. Fruitcake can remain in its pan for storage, if desired. Or carefully remove cake from the pan after about 5 minutes, loosening its edges first.
 12. Brush the warm cake with rum or brandy. Or simple syrup, or flavored simple syrup (vanilla, rum-flavored, etc.). If you like just a hint of rum or brandy flavor, add 1 tablespoon of liquor to 3/4 cup vanilla syrup or simple syrup, and brush this mixture on the cakes.
 13. When the cakes are completely cool, wrap them tightly in plastic wrap, and store at room temperature for up to 6 to 8 weeks.
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Tips from our bakers

- Do you HAVE to brush the cakes with alcohol or syrup? Well, it keeps them moist for weeks; in fact, I just unwrapped one of these cakes I made 6 weeks ago (and brushed with simple syrup just once, then wrapped in plastic); it's just as moist and tasty as it was the day it was baked. But if you want to leave them "un-brushed," understanding they won't stay moist long-term, that's just fine.
- If you've made the small, muffin-sized cakes, it helps to put them all in a large plastic container with a snap-on lid; or into a sealed plastic bag, both to help keep them moist, and to be able to move 3 dozen cakes around without a fuss.
- This recipe can also fill two tea loaf pans. Divide the batter among two lightly greased tea loaf pans, or bake one after the other if you only have one tea loaf pan (if you have a kitchen scale, half the batter will weigh 3 1/2 pounds). Bake the cakes for 2 hours to 2 hours and 10 minutes, or until a cake tester or toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Yield: 2 tea loaves.
- Want to make this cake gluten-free? Simply substitute King Arthur Gluten-Free Flour for the all-purpose flour, and add 3/4 teaspoon xanthan gum along with the flour.