



# Spiced Nut Cake | Mirliton

Yigit Pura | Sweet Alchemy | Chronicle, 2014

This spiced nut cake recipe is the easiest dessert in my repertoire to prepare, as well as one of the tastiest. And as an added bonus, it's gluten-free. The almond and hazelnut flours are not only very forgiving but also make the cake very moist. And the addition of spices used in the traditional *pain d'épices* gives it a certain je ne sais quoi. Given the complex flavor profile of this cake, it's delicious served simply.—Yigit Pura

## LC Je Ne Sais Quoi Note

We're going to be a little more specific and go beyond "je ne sais quoi" so you can be clear about what to expect from this lovely spiced nut cake called *mirliton*. Despite being ethereally light from its meringue-like base, it's also ungodly rich thanks to the nuts and spices. Chances are it's unlike any other spice cake—*pain d'épices* or otherwise—that you've ever encountered. That is to say, in a good way. A very, very good way.

**Special Equipment:** 10-inch (25-centimeter) round cake pan

# SPICED NUT CAKE | MIRLITON RECIPE

Quick Glance	25 M	1 H	Makes 1 10-inch round cake
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## INGREDIENTS

- 6 large whole eggs
- 4 large egg yolks
- 2 1/2 cups (240 grams) hazelnut flour
- 1 1/4 cups (120 grams) almond flour
- 3 tablespoons (30 grams) cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon (2 grams) ground Ceylon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon (2 grams) ground cardamom
- 1/2 teaspoon (2 grams) ground cloves
- Unsalted butter, for the pan
- 1 1/4 cups (250 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon (12 grams) vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- Grated zest of 1 orange, preferably organic
- Grated zest of 1 lemon, preferably organic

## DIRECTIONS

1. Set the eggs out on your counter about 1 hour ahead of time to come to room temperature.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C) and adjust the oven rack to the center position. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Lightly butter the bottom and sides of a 10-inch (25-centimeter) round cake pan, cut a piece of parchment paper to fit the bottom of the pan, and press the paper in the pan. Cut a second piece of parchment paper into a strip 2 inches (5 centimeters) wide to line the side of the pan and press it in the pan.
3. Spread the hazelnut and almond flours on the parchment-lined baking sheet. Toast in the oven for 5 to 6 minutes, or until the flours are a light golden brown and the aroma fills the room. Let cool to room temperature.
4. When the nut flours are cool, sift them along with the cornstarch, cinnamon, cardamom, and cloves into a large bowl.
5. Put the whole eggs, egg yolks, sugar, vanilla, orange zest, and lemon zest in a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Whip at high speed until the mixture triples in size. (This can take as long as 15 minutes. Be sure your eggs are at room temperature when you start, as cold eggs will reach only half the volume needed.)
6. Reduce the mixer to low speed and gently mix in the flour-cornstarch mixture, combining just until everything comes together. Take care not to overmix the batter or it will deflate. Gently scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, filling it 2/3 full. (If you have excess batter, pour it into a smaller pan that you've prepared in the same way as you did the first pan.)
7. Bake the cake for 10 minutes, or until a light golden brown crust forms on the top and the cake begins to visibly rise. Rotate the pan 180°, being sure not to open the oven door until you see that your cake has risen properly and has a very light golden layer at the top. If you try to rotate the pan while the cake is still raw, it could deflate.) Bake for another 10 to 20 minutes, until the top of the cake is golden brown, the sides are pulling away from the pan, the surface bounces back when lightly touched with your fingertips. Also, a paring knife inserted straight into the center of the cake should come out clean and hot to the touch. (The baking time will vary greatly from oven to oven and depending on how frothy your batter is, but figure close to 30 minutes total baking time.)
8. When the cake is done, remove it from the oven and place the pan on a wire rack to cool to room temperature, 15 to 20 minutes. When the cake is cool to the touch, use an offset spatula to loosen the outside of the paper lining from the pan. Invert the cake onto a plate or a baking sheet and then gently shake to release the cake from the pan. Remove the paper lining from the cake and invert it again onto a plate or baking sheet so that the cake is right side up.
9. The cake is best enjoyed right then, still warm to the touch, for the full nutty, spicy flavor, although it can be stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to 3 days.

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