

## Classic Gingerbread Cake

From the episode: *Fall Classics*

### **Makes one 8-inch square cake, serving 8 to 10**

*This cake packs potent yet well-balanced, fragrant, spicy heat. If you are particularly sensitive to spice, you can decrease the amount of dried ginger to 1 tablespoon. Guinness is the test kitchen's favorite brand of stout. Avoid opening the oven door until the minimum baking time has elapsed. If your cake pan has thin walls, you might want to wrap it with premade cake strips or make your own from cheesecloth and foil. This extra insulation will help ensure that the edges of the cake don't overbake. Serve the gingerbread plain or with lightly sweetened whipped cream. Leftovers can be wrapped in plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for 2 days.*

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 3/4** cup stout (see note)
- 1/2** teaspoon baking soda
- 2/3** cup mild molasses
- 3/4** cup (5 1/4 ounces) packed light brown sugar
- 1/4** cup (1 3/4 ounces) granulated sugar
- 1 1/2** cups (7 1/2 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour , plus extra for dusting pan
- 2** tablespoons ground ginger (see note)
- 1/2** teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2** teaspoon table salt
- 1/4** teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4** teaspoon finely ground black pepper
- 2** large eggs
- 1/3** cup vegetable oil

**1** tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 8-inch square baking pan.
- 2.** Bring stout to boil in medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and stir in baking soda (mixture will foam vigorously). When foaming subsides, stir in molasses, brown sugar, and granulated sugar until dissolved; set mixture aside. Whisk flour, ground ginger, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and pepper together in large bowl; set aside.
- 3.** Transfer stout mixture to large bowl. Whisk in eggs, oil, and grated ginger until combined. Whisk wet mixture into flour mixture in thirds, stirring vigorously until completely smooth after each addition.
- 4.** Transfer batter to prepared pan and gently tap pan against counter 3 or 4 times to dislodge any large air bubbles. Bake until top of cake is just firm to touch and toothpick inserted into center comes out clean, 35 to 45 minutes. Cool cake in pan on wire rack, about 1 1/2 hours. Cut into squares and serve warm or at room temperature.

## TECHNIQUE

### NOT SO GINGERLY WITH GINGERBREAD

Most cake batters require a gentle touch to avoid developing glutens in the flour and, thus, a tough crumb. But vigorous stirring actually gave our super-wet gingerbread batter the structure necessary to keep the center from collapsing.

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### GENTLY STIRRED BATTER = SUNKEN CAKE CENTER



## TECHNIQUE

### KEYS TO RICHER, ZINGIER FLAVOR BITTERSWEET BEER

Dark stout contributes deep, caramelized notes.



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### FLAVOR-FREE FAT

Clean, neutral-tasting oil brings key flavors into clear relief.



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### A ROOTY BOOST

Fresh ginger kicks up the fiery, pungent notes of dried ginger.



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### BACKSEAT SPICES

Black pepper and cinnamon



complement—without  
overwhelming—the ginger.



## TECHNIQUE

### INSULATING CAKE STRIP: HOME EDITION

Cake strips promote more even baking, preventing doming and cracking as well as keeping the edges of a cake from overbaking. This extra insulation is particularly important if the walls of your pan are thin.

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**1. SOAK STRIP** Soak 2 by 32-inch piece of cheesecloth or folded newspaper with water. Gently wring out excess water.



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**2. FOLD IN FOIL** Place damp strip at bottom of 36-inch length of foil. Repeatedly fold foil over dampened strip to cover to make 2 by 36-inch strip.



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**3. WRAP AROUND PAN** Mold insulating strip around pan and pinch ends together to seal.



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**4. SECURE** To ensure insulating strip stays in place around pan, secure with twine.



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*America's Test Kitchen* is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of *Cook's Country* and *Cook's Illustrated* magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to *America's Test Kitchen* ([www.americastestkitchen.com](http://www.americastestkitchen.com)) on public television.