

Spice Cake

Serves 15 to 18

Using fresh ginger instead of dried ground ginger gives this cake a brighter flavor. You can serve the cake right out of the pan, in which case you'll only need 3 cups of frosting for the top of the cake.

1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
16 tablespoons (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into 16 pieces and softened
2 1/4 cups (11 1/4 ounces) all purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon table salt
2 large whole eggs plus 3 large egg yolks, at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 3/4 cups (12 1/4 ounces) sugar
2 tablespoons light or mild molasses
1 tablespoon minced or grated fresh ginger (see note)
1 cup buttermilk, room temperature
4 cups cream cheese frosting

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 13 by 9 inch baking pan, then line the bottom with parchment paper.
2. Combine the cinnamon, cardamom, allspice, cloves, and nutmeg in a small bowl; reserve 1/2 teaspoon of the spice mixture for the frosting. Melt 4 tablespoons of the butter in a small skillet over medium heat and continue to cook, swirling the pan constantly, until the butter is light brown, 3 to 6 minutes. Stir in the spice mixture and cook until fragrant, about 15 seconds. Set the mixture aside to cool slightly.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together. In a small bowl, whisk the whole eggs, egg yolks, and vanilla together.
4. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the remaining 12 tablespoons butter, the sugar, and molasses on medium high speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 6 minutes; scrape down the bowl with a rubber spatula. Beat in the ginger, cooled butter spice mixture, and half of the egg mixture until combine, about 30 seconds. Beat in the remaining egg mixture until combined, about 30 seconds, and scrape down the bowl again.
5. Reduce the mixer speed to low and beat in one third of the flour mixture, followed by half of the buttermilk. Repeat with half of the remaining flour mixture and the remaining buttermilk. Beat in the remaining flour mixture until just combined; scrape down the bowl.

6. Give the batter a final stir with a rubber spatula to make sure it is thoroughly combined. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, smooth the top, and lightly tap the pan against the countertop two or three times to settle the batter. Bake the cake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few moist crumbs attached, 30 to 35 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through the baking time.

7. Cool the cake completely in the pan, set on a wire rack, about 2 hours. Run a small knife around the edge of the cake and flip the cake out onto a wire rack. Peel off the parchment paper, then flip the cake right side up onto a serving platter. Stir the reserved spice mixture into the frosting, spread the frosting evenly over the top and sides of the cake, and serve.