

## Carrot Layer Cake

From America's Test Kitchen episode: *Great American Classics*.

**Serves 10 to 12**

*Shred the carrots on the large holes of a box grater or in a food processor fitted with the shredding disk. Do not substitute liquid buttermilk for the buttermilk powder. To ensure the proper spreading consistency for the frosting, use cold cream cheese. If your baked cake is of an uneven thickness, adjust the orientation of the layers as they are stacked to produce a level cake. Assembling this cake on a cardboard cake round trimmed to a 6 by 8-inch rectangle makes it easy to press the pecans onto the sides of the frosted cake.*

### INGREDIENTS

#### CAKE

- 1 3/4** cups (8 3/4 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 2** teaspoons baking powder
- 1** teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/2** teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 3/4** teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2** teaspoon salt
- 1/4** teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 1/4** cups (8 3/4 ounces) light brown sugar
- 3/4** cup vegetable oil
- 3** large eggs
- 1** teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 2/3** cups shredded carrots (4 carrots)
- 2/3** cups dried currants

#### FROSTING

- 16** tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 3** cups (12 ounces) confectioners' sugar
- 1/3** cup buttermilk powder
- 2** teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/4** teaspoon salt
- 12** ounces cream cheese, chilled and cut into 12 equal pieces
- 2** cups (8 ounces) pecans, toasted and chopped coarse

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. FOR THE CAKE:** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 18 by 13-inch rimmed baking sheet, line with parchment paper, and grease parchment. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and cloves together in large bowl.
- 2.** Whisk sugar, oil, eggs, and vanilla together until mixture is smooth. Stir in carrots and currants. Add flour mixture and fold with rubber spatula until mixture is just combined.
- 3.** Transfer batter to prepared baking sheet and smooth surface with offset spatula. Bake until center of cake is firm to touch, 15 to 18 minutes. Cool in pan on wire rack for 5 minutes. Invert cake onto wire rack (do not remove parchment) and then reinvert onto second wire rack. Cool cake completely, about 30 minutes.
- 4. FOR THE FROSTING:** Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat butter, sugar, buttermilk powder, vanilla, and salt on low speed until smooth, about 2 minutes, scraping down bowl as needed. Increase speed to medium-low; add cream cheese, 1 piece at a time; and mix until smooth, about 2 minutes.
- 5.** Transfer cooled cake to cutting board, parchment side down. Using sharp chef's knife, cut cake and parchment in half crosswise and then lengthwise to make 4 equal rectangles, about 6 by 8 inches each.
- 6.** Place 6 by 8-inch cardboard rectangle on cake turntable or plate. Place 1 cake rectangle, parchment side up, on cardboard and carefully remove parchment. Using offset spatula, spread 2/3 cup frosting evenly over cake layer. Repeat with two more layers of cake, frosting each layer with 2/3 cup frosting and pressing

gently on each layer to level. Place last rectangle of cake on top and frost top of cake with 1 cup frosting. Use remaining frosting to coat sides of cake. (It's fine if some crumbs show through frosting on sides, but if you go back to smooth top of cake, be sure that spatula is free of crumbs.)

**7.** Hold cake with 1 hand and gently press chopped pecans onto sides with other hand. Chill for at least 1 hour before serving.

**To Make Ahead:** The cake may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours before serving.

## TECHNIQUE

### STRUCTURAL SOLUTION

For a cream cheese frosting that's stiff enough to hold several layers of cake in place, we used tangy buttermilk powder—along with confectioners' sugar—to add body.

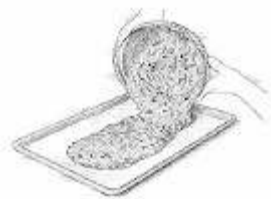


## TECHNIQUE

## BUILDING A BEAUTIFUL LAYER CAKE

### 1. MAKE A THIN CAKE

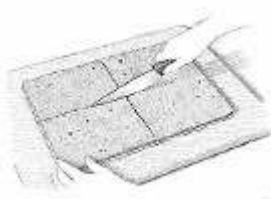
Bake batter on baking sheet to create thin, level cake that doesn't need to be split horizontally.



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### 2. CUT INTO RECTANGLES

Slice cooled sheet cake into four equal rectangles.



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### 3. STACK 'EM

Spread frosting over rectangular layer placed on cardboard; repeat with remaining layers.



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### 4. NUTS ON THE SIDES

Press chopped pecans onto sides of cake to hide any imperfections and add crunch.



*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.