

CARROT AND PARSNIP LAYER CAKE WITH HONEY-CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Makes 1 layer cake; 12 to 16 servings

I'm a creature of habit, so when my friend Annelies invited me to dinner in a neighborhood here in San Francisco that I rarely frequent, I jumped at the chance. Not only did I get to dine at a new restaurant, but I got to hang out with a friend too. After our meal, we agreed to split a dessert and were particularly smitten with the idea of the parsnip cake on the menu. Like carrot, parsnip has a subtle earthy and nutty sweetness when cooked. I've taken it even further, though, layering parsnip cake with carrot cake to really up the game. The deeper, almost creamy parsnip makes the common carrot brighter and more vibrant. With honey-sweetened cream cheese frosting and a sprinkling of toasted coconut, this dense winter vegetable cake is now one of my favorites.

CAKE BATTER

3 3/4 cups (525 g) all-purpose flour

3/4 cup (90 g) almond flour or meal

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons baking powder

1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda

1 teaspoon kosher salt

3 cups (600 g) granulated sugar

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

3 large eggs

1 large egg white

1 cup (6 ounces or 170 g) finely chopped
fresh pineapple (or drained canned crushed pineapple)

1 pound (455 g) carrots, finely grated

1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom

1/2 pound (225 g) parsnips, finely grated

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

HONEY– CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

16 ounces (455 g or 2 bricks) cream cheese, at room temperature

1 cup (225 g or 2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1/2 cup (140 g) honey

1 cup (115 g) powdered sugar

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

TO ASSEMBLE

2 cups (170 g) unsweetened coconut flakes*

MAKE THE CAKE BATTER

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Coat three 9-inch round cake pans with cooking spray and line the bottom of each with a round of parchment paper.

Place the flour, almond meal, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl and stir vigorously with a balloon whisk until the ingredients are evenly distributed and uniform in color. Place the sugar, oil, and vanilla in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat together for about 30 seconds on medium speed to incorporate. Add the eggs, one at time, beating until each is incorporated before adding the next, then add the egg white. Scrape down the bowl with a rubber spatula and then add the dry ingredients and mix on low speed until incorporated. Add the pineapple and mix until incorporated.

Scoop about one-third of the batter into a separate bowl. To the remaining larger amount of batter in the mixer bowl, add the carrots, cinnamon, turmeric, and cardamom, and fold to combine. To the second bowl of batter, add the parsnips, ginger, and nutmeg, and fold to combine. Pour the parsnip cake batter into one cake pan and divide the carrot batter between the other two cake pans.

Bake until a toothpick inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then run a thin butter knife around the pan and invert the cakes onto wire racks to cool completely.

MAKE THE HONEY– CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Combine the cream cheese, butter, honey, powdered sugar, and vanilla in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat until the frosting is pale and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes.

Refrigerate the frosting for at least 30 minutes to firm up.

ASSEMBLE THE CAKE

Toast the coconut in a large dry skillet over medium-high heat, stirring gently, until golden brown (some of the coconut will brown faster than the rest; that's fine). Immediately pour the coconut into a bowl to cool. Take the frosting out of the fridge and beat on medium speed for about 15 seconds to loosen it up. Place one carrot cake layer on a cake platter or stand, flat side up, and spread some frosting over the

top of that layer. Place the parsnip layer over the frosting and repeat. Place the final carrot cake layer over the parsnip layer and frost the top and sides of the cake. Using your hands, pat the toasted coconut all over the sides of the cake. Brush any stray coconut off the platter before serving.

** Unsweetened coconut flakes can be difficult to find. Some upscale grocery stores carry it, and often you can find it in the bulk section, where you can buy just enough for your recipe. At regular grocery stores, if it isn't stocked in the baking section next to the sweetened shredded coconut, look for it near the dried fruit like raisins, dried ginger, and dried papaya. If you can't find it, though, the sweetened or unsweetened shredded coconut in the baking section will work. Just toast it over medium-low heat and pay extra attention if you use the sweetened shredded coconut. The sugar in the sweetened coconut will caramelize and burn faster than unsweetened shredded coconut.*

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