

Parsnip-Ginger Layer Cake with Browned Buttercream Frosting

Excerpted from *The Vegetable Butcher* by Cara Mangini and Workman Publishing

Serves 8 to 10

Ingredients:

Unsalted butter, at room temperature, for greasing the pans
2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting the pans
1 cup grapeseed or canola oil (see Notes)
3 cups peeled and shredded parsnips (about 1 1/4 pounds)
1 1/2-inch knob (1 to 1 1/4 ounces) fresh ginger, peeled and grated on a Microplane
1 tablespoon ground ginger
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1 1/2 cups sugar
3 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
4 large eggs
3/4 cup low-fat or whole milk
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 cup toasted pecans or walnuts, chopped, (see page 19)
Browned Buttercream Frosting (recipe follows)

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter and flour the bottoms and sides of two 9-inch cake pans. Line the bottom of each with a round of parchment paper.

Heat 1/4 cup of the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. When it is hot but not smoking, add the parsnips and fresh ginger and stir to coat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the parsnips are fragrant and tender, 7 to 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let the parsnip mixture cool.

Meanwhile, whisk together the ground ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice in a large bowl. Add the 2 cups of flour, the sugar, baking powder, and salt, and whisk until incorporated.

In a smaller, separate bowl, whisk together the remaining 3/4 cup of oil, the eggs, milk, and vanilla.

Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and stir until just combined. Stir in the parsnip mixture and toasted pecans until just combined.

Divide the batter evenly between the two cake pans. Bake until the tops begin to turn golden, or an inserted toothpick or cake tester comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes.

Transfer the cakes to wire cooling racks and let cool in the pans for 10 minutes. To remove the cakes, run a knife around the inside edge of each cake pan. Invert the pans onto the cooling racks, leaving the pans in place until the cakes release. Remove the pans and parchment, and allow the cakes to cool completely.

Place one of the cakes top side up on a cake plate. Scoop about one third of the frosting onto the center of the cake, and use an offset spatula (or butter knife) to spread out the frosting evenly. Place the second cake, top side down, onto the frosted cake top. Scoop the remaining frosting onto the center of the second

layer (you may use less frosting if you prefer—you want just enough to cover the top surface of the cake) and spread it in an even layer all the way to the edge (leave the sides bare).

Notes: I like to leave the sides of this cake bare, spreading the frosting generously between the layers and on top—this way the parsnips really shine—but you can frost the sides of the cake as well. There will be enough frosting either way.

For a lower-fat version of this cake, replace $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the oil with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened applesauce. To make a 4-layer cake, bake the cake in 2 pans and turn them out of the pans as directed. Once the cakes have cooled completely, cut each in half horizontally with a serrated knife. Double the frosting. Layer and lightly frost each round.

Browned Buttercream Frosting

Makes about $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups

Ingredients:

12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) unsalted butter
4 to 4½ cups confectioners' sugar
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
3 to 6 tablespoons milk or warm water, plus extra if needed

Directions:

Heat the butter in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat until it melts and becomes golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, sift 4 cups of the confectioners' sugar into a medium-size bowl (or the bowl of a stand mixer).

Add the browned butter to the confectioners' sugar along with the vanilla and beat together with an electric hand mixer (or a stand mixer) on medium-low speed until just incorporated.

Add 3 tablespoons milk or more to reach your desired consistency and beat on medium-low speed until the frosting is light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. If you add too much liquid and the frosting is too thin, just add more confectioners' sugar, a little at a time, to reach your desired consistency. Let the frosting cool before spreading on the cake.

It will keep, in an airtight container, refrigerated, for up to 1 week. Bring it to room temperature before using and add more milk or warm water to thin it if needed.

