

Cranberry-Carrot Cake with Maple–Cream Cheese Frosting

Can be made SOY-FREE by omitting the frosting
Can be made NUT-FREE by omitting the walnuts

8 SERVINGS

This cake is festive and luscious, but with a minimum of fat and a plethora of fresh fruit (and a vegetable!) in the batter—not the least bit guilt-inducing. Using a springform pan makes it easier to release this cake in a lovely, intact round, but the same can be achieved with a flexible silicone pan.

8 to 10 ounces fresh cranberries
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup natural granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups whole wheat pastry or spelt flour
2 tablespoons ground flaxseeds, optional
1 teaspoon baking powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup applesauce
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup maple syrup
2 tablespoons safflower or other light oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup grated carrot
Maple–Cream Cheese frosting (see following recipe)
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup finely chopped walnuts

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Place the cranberries in a food processor and pulse on and off until evenly and finely chopped. Transfer to a bowl. Add the sugar, stir well, and set aside.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, optional flaxseeds, baking powder, baking soda, ginger, and cinnamon. Stir to combine thoroughly.
4. Make a well in the center and add the applesauce, syrup, safflower oil, and vanilla. Stir until the wet and dry ingredients are completely combined, but don't overmix.
5. Stir the cranberries and carrots into the batter. Pour into a lightly oiled 9-inch round cake pan or springform pan (see recipe introduction). Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until a knife inserted into the center tests clean.
6. If using the walnuts, toast them in a small dry skillet over medium heat until they brown lightly. Once the cake has cooled to room temperature, release from the pan if you've used a springform or other easy-to-release pan and spread the frosting over the top evenly, allowing it to drip fetchingly over the sides. Otherwise, leave the cake in the pan and simply frost the top.
7. Sprinkle evenly with the optional walnuts, then cut into wedges to serve.