Carrot Pistachio Cake with Mascarpone Frosting

By Jesse Dodson

Sweet and moist spice cake with Mediterranean nuance.

Yield: Two-layer 9" cake
Prep Time: 4 hrs
Bake Time: 40 mins

Ingredients:

Cake Batter
- 412g (2 1/2 cups) Caputo "00" Chef's Flour
- 200g (1 cup) sugar
- 190g (1 cup) light brown sugar
- 7g (1 1/2 teaspoons) baking soda
- 4g (1 teaspoon) baking powder
- 7g (1 teaspoon) fine sea salt
- 5g (2 teaspoons) cinnamon
- 1.5g (1/2 teaspoon) nutmeg
- 235g (1 cup) canola or vegetable oil
- 113g (1/2 cup or 1 stick) butter, unsalted
- 4 eggs (approx. 220g)
- 14g (1 tablespoon) vanilla extract
- 430g (3 cups) carrots, freshly grated
- 125g (1 cup) unsalted pistachio pieces, lightly roasted

Mascarpone Frosting
- 340g (1 1/2 cups) mascarpone cheese
- 170g (3/4 cup or 1.5 sticks) butter, unsalted, room temp.
- 8g (1 1/2 teaspoons) vanilla extract
- 681g (5 and 2/3 cups) powdered sugar
- 4g (1/2 teaspoon) salt
- 63g (1/2 cup) finely ground pistachios (for garnish)

Instructions:

Carrot Pistachio Cake

1. Preheat the oven to 350F.
2. Prepare two 9" pans by lightly greasing them with pan spray or butter. Then, cut out two 9" circles of parchment paper and place them in the bottom of the pans.
3. Peel and grate fresh carrots. Measure and place in a bowl.
4. Measure the pistachios (lightly roast and cool to temp if needed), then place them in the bowl with the carrots.
5. In the bowl of a stand mixer, measure and sift the Caputo "00" Chef's Flour, sugar, brown sugar, baking soda, baking powder, sea salt, and spices. Then, add the bowl to your stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment.

6. In a separate, microwave-safe bowl, measure and add the oil and butter. Melt together until just melted, not simmering or browned.

7. Add the melted butter/oil to the mixing bowl with the dry ingredients. Mix on low speed until fully combined (about 2 minutes on speed 1). Halfway through mixing, stop the mixer and scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl with a spatula.

8. Add the eggs and vanilla extract, then mix until emulsified (about 1 minute on speed 1). Scrape the sides and the bottom of the bowl with a spatula.

9. Add the carrots and pistachios and mix until fully combined (about 1 minute on speed 1). Scrape the sides and the bottom of the bowl with a spatula.

10. Remove the bowl from the mixer and scrape any batter from the paddle into the bowl.

11. Divide the batter equally into each prepared 9" pan, about 790g per pan (the batter does not need to be perfectly even as it will even out in the oven).

12. Place the cakes in the center of the pre-heated oven set to 350F. Bake for 35-40 minutes until done. Check for doneness by inserting a clean, dry toothpick, which will come out clean when the cakes are baked.

13. Let the cakes cool in the pans to room temperature, approximately 1-2 hours.

14. After the cakes are cool, gently de-pan them, remove the parchment paper, wrap in plastic, and refrigerate for 1 hour to overnight. Chilling the cakes will allow for the internal moisture to redistribute more evenly, and the texture will become firmer at a cooler temperature, making it much easier to apply the frosting without crumbling.

Mascarpone Frosting

1. Measure and place all frosting ingredients into a mixing bowl fitted with the paddle attachment.

2. Mix on low speed until the ingredients come together, about 1 minute.

3. Increase the mixer speed to 2 or 3 and mix until the frosting is smooth, creamy, and slightly airy (about 2-3 minutes).

Assembly

For the best looking cakes, use a cake decorating spatula and a turntable, and the "crumb coat" method (depicted below).

1. Apply a center layer of frosting between the cakes. Then, stack the two layers on top of one another.

2. Apply a thin "crumb coat" of frosting to lock in the crumbs and create a clean finish.

3. Refrigerate until the crumb coat is firm.

4. Apply the final coat of frosting.

5. Grind pistachios using a food processor or a mortar and pestle (alternatively, you can place the pistachios in a Ziploc bag and pound them into fine pieces).

6. Gently press the ground pistachios into the sides of the cake, then sprinkle the remaining ground pistachios on top.

7. Store at room temperature for the best flavor and texture, or store covered in the refrigerator for several days.