

SPICED PECAN CAKE WITH PECAN FROSTING

Source: Chef Paul Prudhomme's Louisiana Kitchen

Prepared: January 2016 by Rhonda O'Dell

Makes: one 3-layer cake

2 cups coarsely chopped pecans
¼ cup, packed, light brown sugar
2 Tablespoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
4 Tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
2 Tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, in all
3/8) unsalted butter
2 cups sugar, in all
3 cups sifted all-purpose flour
2 Tablespoons baking powder
1 cup plus 2 Tablespoons milk
3 egg whites

Glaze (recipe follows)

Frosting (recipe follows)

Place the pecans in a large ungreased roasting pan and roast at 425 degrees for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, in a medium-size bowl combine the brown sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Then mix in the 4 Tablespoons butter. Add the roasted pecans to the butter mixture and coat them thoroughly. Return mixture to pan and roast for 10 minutes more, stirring once or twice. Stir in 2 Tablespoons of the vanilla and roast 5 minutes more. Remove from oven and set aside.

In a large bowl of an electric mixer, cream the 1 ½ sticks butter and 1 ½ cups of the sugar on high speed until very light and fluffy, about 6-8 minutes.

In a separate bowl sift together the flour and baking powder. In a third bowl combine the milk and the remaining 2 teaspoons vanilla. Add the flour mixture and milk mixture alternately to the butter mixture, beating on high speed until well blended and scraping the bowl sides between additions. Stir in pecans.

In a separate bowl whip the egg whites on high speed until frothy, about 30 seconds. Add the remaining ½ cup of sugar and continue beating until mixture is stiff and holds peaks, about 2 minutes. Gently fold egg-white mixture into the batter, a third at a time.

Spoon batter into 3 greased and lightly floured 8 inch round cake pans (1 ½ inches deep). Spread batter so it is slightly lower in the center (since it peaks in the center during cooking). Bake at 350 degrees until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean, about 40 minutes. Let cook 10 minutes, then carefully remove from pans and place on a wire rack. Cool thoroughly. Glaze, then spread generously with icing between layers and on top and sides.

Glaze

1 cup water
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Combine the water and sugar in a small saucepan; bring to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla. Immediately brush glaze over the top of each cake layer with a pastry brush, a little at a time, using all of the glaze.

Pecan Frosting

1 ½ cups granulated sugar
¾ cup water
8 egg yolks
¾ pound (3 sticks) margarine, softened (see Note)
2 ½ cups powdered sugar
4 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
2 ½ cups coarsely chopped pecans, dry roasted until dark in color then cooled

Note: It's best to use margarine rather than butter in this frosting because butter tends to melt out of the frosting as the cake sits a while.

Combine the granulated sugar and water in a 1 quart saucepan. Cook over medium heat to soft-thread stage (230 degrees on a candy thermometer), about 15 minutes, do *not* stir.

In a large bowl of an electric mixer beat the egg yolks on high speed just slightly, about 5 seconds. Gradually add the hot sugar-water mixture and beat until thoroughly cooled, thick, shiny and very pale, about 10 minutes. (Start at low speed so it won't splash and then go to high speed). If crystallized sugar builds up around the sides of the bowl, don't scrape it in to the mixture; it will make the frosting lumpy and will have plenty of frosting without it. Gradually add the margarine and mix on medium speed until completely blended and very smooth, about 5 minutes. Blend in the powdered sugar and vanilla on low speed until smooth; then add the pecans and beat on high speed until thoroughly mixed and very thick. If frosting is too thick, thin with a little cream, milk or water.

COOK'S NOTES

