

Supreme Pumpkin-Sour Cream Coffee Cake

Recipe 311 of 365

On my plate and in my mouth, this coffee cake, made with home-roasted sugar pumpkin, is everything I want in a coffee cake. The topping has just the right sweetness, the cake is moist enough to handle a few days on the counter, and the balance of spices works well.

But a disclosure: It is not everything I want in a recipe. I roasted and scraped the flesh out of one five-pound pumpkin, and whirled it into the batter. **But I didn't measure the pumpkin.** I'm guestimating it was about 3 1/2 cups pureed pumpkin, or not quite 2 cans, but how am I to know? Your pumpkin may be more fleshy than mine, or I could have been more liberal when scraping out the seeds and skinning my squash than you might be with yours.

So, if you make this, use your judgment with the pumpkin, adding more in at the end if the dough looks too stiff – you want a batter that's a little thicker than cake batter, but not nearly as thick as cookie dough. And please measure your pumpkin, and let me know what does or doesn't work.

And oh, that trick at the end – it's a lifesaver!

TIME: 40 minutes prep

MAKES: 1 giant coffee cake

To roast ahead:

One 5-pound sugar pumpkin or kabocha squash

For the topping:

2 cups pecans

1 cup (packed) brown sugar

1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

For the cake:

Butter and flour, for the pan

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 1/2 cups white whole wheat flour

1/2 cup flaxseed meal

1 teaspoon ground cardamom

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground allspice

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 tablespoon baking soda

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter

1 cup sour cream

2 cups sugar
4 large eggs

To do ahead: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Pry the stem off the pumpkin, and bake, whole, for 75 to 90 minutes, or until soft all the way through when poked with a long knife. When cool enough to handle, cut the pumpkin open, scrape out the seeds, and peel the flesh away from the skin. (You can do this up to 48 hours before making the cake, then store the pumpkin in the refrigerator, covered.)

When you're ready to bake, combine the topping ingredients in a food processor. Pulse ten times, transfer the topping to a bowl, and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour a 10" tube pan, and set aside.

Cut the pumpkin into 1" chunks and puree in the food processor. (If there are still little bits of pumpkin, that's fine, it'll get pureed again later.) Measure 3 1/2 cups pureed pumpkin, return it to the food processor, and save the rest (if any) for another use.

Whisk the first ten cake ingredients (through baking soda) in a mixing bowl, and set aside.

Brown the butter: melt the butter in a small saucepan. When melted, let cook over low heat, swirling occasionally, until the foam on top subsides and the butter solids begin to brown along the bottom of the pan, about 5 minutes. Add the brown butter and sour cream to the 3 1/2 cups pumpkin, and whirl until uniform in color and texture.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the sugar and eggs on medium speed until light, about 2 minutes. Add the dry ingredients and the pumpkin mixture in three additions, alternating between each.

Transfer half the batter to the tube pan, then sprinkle with half the topping. Add the remaining batter, then add the rest of the topping. Bake for 70 to 80 minutes, or until a wooden skewer inserted into the center comes out with a few crumbs attached.

Let the coffee cake cool in the pan for about an hour. When you're ready to transfer it to a platter, run a small knife around all edges of the cake. Cover the coffee cake with a large piece of wide heavy duty tinfoil (one that's big enough to cover the entire cake, including the sides), and crimp the edges around the edge of the pan, effectively sealing the topping in. Flip the pan onto a cooling rack upside-down, uncrimp the foil, and pull the pan off the cake. Invert a serving plate and center it on the upside-down cake, and wrap the foil around the bottom of the plate. Flip again, and voila: Crumbs stay in.