

Oatmeal Snacking Cake

This moist, simple cake has been a favourite of mine for decades, but I also like to take it up to the next level with a decadent Pecan Coconut Topping. Soaking the oats makes the cake texture fluffy, and it's easy to whip up in no time.

Serves 12 to 16 (Makes one 9-inch/23 cm round cake)

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 45 to 50 minutes

Pecan-Coconut Topping:

½ cup (100 g) packed light brown sugar

2 Tbsp (15 g) cornstarch

½ cup (125 mL) whipping cream

3 Tbsp (45 mL) pure maple syrup

3 large egg yolks

¼ cup (60 g) unsalted butter

1½ cups (150 g) sweetened flaked coconut

1 cup (100 g) toasted chopped pecans

1 tsp vanilla extract

Pinch of fine salt

1 cup (100 g) regular rolled oats

1¼ cups (310 mL) boiling water

1 cup (200 g) packed light brown sugar

1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar

¼ cup (60 mL) canola oil

2 large eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

1½ cups (225 g) all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp salt

1. For the topping, whisk the brown sugar and cornstarch in a medium saucepan to combine. Whisk in the cream, maple syrup and eggs and heat over medium-high, whisking constantly until thickened and the filling just begins to bubble, about 6 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat and whisk in the butter, then stir in the coconut, pecans (or walnuts), vanilla and salt. Scrape the filling into a bowl, cool and then chill completely before using.
 2. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Grease the bottom and sides of a 9-inch (23 cm) round cake or springform pan and line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper.
 3. Measure the oats into a large bowl and pour the boiling water over top. Let sit for about 10 minutes to allow the oats to plump up and the water to cool. Stir in the brown sugar, granulated sugar, oil, eggs and vanilla by hand.
 4. In a separate bowl, sift the flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon and salt and add the dry ingredients all at once to the oats, stirring until evenly blended. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake the cake for 45 to 50 minutes, until a tester inserted in the centre comes out clean. Spread the chilled topping over the coffee cake as soon as it comes out of the oven.
- Cool the cake on a cooling rack to room temperature.
5. To serve, slice the cake into individual portions. The cake will keep, well wrapped, at room temperature for up to 6 days, or can be frozen for up to 3 months.

KEY LIME MERINGUE PIE

A key lime pie hints at warm weather with its tart/sweet citrus filling. The version below is topped with an Italian meringue, which makes use of the leftover egg whites from the filling and this style of meringue is stable, so can hold in the fridge, without weeping or becoming dewy like a lemon meringue pie topping.

Unlike commercially made key lime pies, the colour of the lime custard is not green, but more of a yellow colour.

Yield: 1 9-inch (23 pie)

Servings: 8-10

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Crust:

1 ½ cups (185 g) graham cracker crumbs (or ground digestive biscuits)
½ cup (50 g) sweetened flaked coconut
6 Tbsp (90 g) unsalted butter, melted

Filling:

1 300 g tin sweetened condensed milk
½ cup (125 mL) fresh lime juice
2 tsp freshly grated lime zest
1 tsp vanilla extract
4 large egg yolks

Meringue:

4 large egg whites (reserved from filling), at room temperature
½ tsp cream of tartar
1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar

1. Preheat the oven to 350 °F (180 °C).
2. Stir the graham crumbs, coconut and melted butter together until crumbly and press this into an ungreased 9-inch (23 cm) pie plate. Bake the crust for 10 minutes, then cool before filling.
3. For the filling, reduce the oven temperature to 300 °F (150 °C). Whisk the condensed milk with the lime juice, zest and vanilla and then whisk in the egg yolks (save the whites for the meringue). Pour this into the cooled crust and bake for 30 minutes, until the filling no longer jiggles when the pan is moved. Cool the pie to room temperature. Once cooled, the pie can be chilled and topped with meringue later.
4. Increase the oven temperature to 400°F (200°C). Whip the whites and cream of tartar with electric beaters or in a stand mixer fitted with the whip attachment until they are just past foamy (frothy but not holding a soft peak). Bring the sugar with 3 Tbsp (45 mL) of water up to a boil on high heat without stirring. Continue to boil the sugar until it measures 240 °F (115 °C) on a candy thermometer. Carefully pour the sugar down the side of the bowl while beating on high speed and continue whipping until the meringue is almost at room temperature, about 5 minutes.
5. Place the meringue in a large piping bag fitted with a large star tip. Pipe a pattern of your wish (spikes upward or spiral around) on top of the cooled filling (alternatively, you can dollop and spread the meringue over the filling). Bake this for 4-5 minutes, until the meringue browns as desired (keep an eye on it, it can brown quickly!) Alternatively, the meringue can be browned using a butane torch (since the meringue is fully cooked, the torching is for effect). Cool the pie to room temperature and then chill completely (2-3 hours) before serving.