Mom's 14-Carat Cake

Make-ahead · Serves a crowd · Serves TBD

Ken's note: TBD

Mom called it "the best carrot cake recipe ever," and the cream cheese frosting just as good. It's loaded with carrots, pineapple, nuts, and coconut, and it keeps 2–3 weeks in the refrigerator, covered. Mom's original used 2 cups of sugar in the cake and 1 lb of confectioners' sugar in the frosting; both are trimmed here.

Ingredients

Cake

- 2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1½ tsp baking soda
- 1½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon (Mom usually adds double or triple: 4–6 tsp)
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1½ cups vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups finely grated raw carrots (Mom uses a small bag of baby carrots)
- 1 (8½-oz) can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1½ cups chopped nuts (Mom's original says ½ cup, but she usually uses 1½)
- 8 oz flaked coconut (one bag; the original called for a 3½-oz can, optional)

Cream cheese frosting

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 (8-oz) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3 cups (about 12 oz) confectioners' sugar, sifted if lumpy
- Milk, if needed

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease and flour three 9-inch round cake pans. Sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Add the sugar, oil, and eggs and mix well. Add the carrots, pineapple, nuts, and coconut and blend thoroughly.
2. Pour into the pans and bake 35–40 minutes. Cool a few minutes in the pans, turn out onto racks, and cool completely.
3. For the frosting, cream the butter, cream cheese, and vanilla well. Gradually beat in the confectioners' sugar. If it's too thick to spread, add a small amount of milk. Fill the layers and frost the top and sides.
4. Mom often bakes it in a 13×9 (or larger, 14×9) pan instead of layers; use the same oven temperature and start testing at 35 minutes.