

Fabulous Fruitcake

For the fruit mixture:

2 heaping cups (about 140 grams) raisins or dried sweetened cranberries

1 heaping cup dried cherries

1 heaping cup (about 140 grams) raisins

1 heaping cup dates (about 140 grams), pitted and chopped about 7 large medjool dates

1/2 cup (125 ml) Scotch, rum or brandy or orange liquor or apple cider or orange juice

For the Cake:

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon allspice

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking powder

3 cups (360 grams) flour

Grated rind of a whole orange

2 cups packed (425 grams) brown sugar

1 cup (225 grams) butter/margarine

4 large eggs

1/4 cup (60 ml) corn syrup or golden syrup

1/2 cup (118 ml) orange juice

2 cups (227 grams) toasted walnuts, chopped in chunks

1/2 cup (approximately) (118 ml) maple syrup for brushing tops of cakes

Place all the dried fruits in a microwaveable bowl with the Scotch or other liquor. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and microwave 3-4 minutes till hot. Let sit around 45 minutes- 1 hour. Set aside.

Prepare two 9 x 5 loaf pans, spraying with oil spray and lining with parchment paper. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 350 F/180 C and when oven is hot, toast the walnuts on rimmed baking sheet for 8-10 minutes till lightly toasted. Let cool on wire rack and chop roughly with a knife.

Lower temperature to 300 F/150 C (approximately) and prepare cake batter.

Stir together in a bowl flour, baking powder, spices, orange peel and salt till blended. Place butter/margarine in mixer with brown sugar and beat smooth. Add eggs one at a time, incorporating till batter is smooth. Mix corn syrup and orange juice in cup measure and add alternating with flour mixture to mixer, beating just till smooth, scraping down sides and bottom to make sure all is combined. Add walnuts and dried fruits with any liquid in bowl to mixture and beat just till combined. Scrape batter evenly between the two loaf pans. They will be fairly full but no worries, they will not overflow the pans.

Bake 350 1 hour 40 - 1 hour 45 minutes or till wooden toothpick inserted into cake comes out with a crumb or two clinging to it but not wet.

Put on wire racks still in loaf pans and using pastry brush, put 1/4 cup maple syrup drizzled over top of cake and paint with brush on the top quickly since it absorbs the syrup fast. Repeat with second cake. Let cool completely and wrap cakes tightly in plastic wrap, letting ripen at least 2-3 days before eating. The longer it sits (about a four days to a week) the better it tastes. Freezes very well. When cake begins to get stale, fabulous lightly toasted with butter or cream cheese.