

Gingerbread Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting: A Cozy Holiday Bake

cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and nutmeg



OVEN
350°F

TIME
2-3 min

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INGREDIENTS

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground cloves
... teaspoon ground nutmeg
¾ cup brown sugar (packed)
½ cup butter, softened (1 stick, unsalted recommended)
1 egg, large
1 cup molasses (unsulphured, regular or dark)
½ cup unsweetened applesauce
1 cup hot water
1 (8 oz) package cream cheese, softened
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
Pinch of salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 ½ cups powdered sugar (confectioners' sugar)

Swaps and Notes:

Molasses: Use unsulphured molasses (regular or dark). Avoid blackstrap molasses, as it can be too bitter for baking.

Unsweetened Applesauce: This adds moisture and natural sweetness while reducing the need for excess fat.

Hot Water: This helps bloom the spices and cocoa (if using a different recipe for chocolate gingerbread) and contributes to the cake's moist texture.

Spices: The combination of cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and nutmeg is classic gingerbread. You can adjust amounts to your preference or add a tiny pinch of allspice.

Brown Sugar: Packed brown sugar adds moisture and a deeper, caramel-like flavor.

Butter (Cake & Frosting): Unsalted butter, softened to room temperature, is crucial for both the cake's texture and the frosting's creaminess.

Eggs: Large eggs, at room temperature, incorporate best into the batter.

Cream Cheese (Frosting): Ensure it's softened to room temperature for a smooth, lump-free frosting. Full-fat cream cheese is recommended for richness.

Powdered Sugar (Frosting): Adjust the amount to your desired sweetness and consistency.

Vanilla Extract (Frosting): Pure vanilla extract is recommended.

Optional Garnish: A dusting of ground cinnamon, candied ginger pieces, or a few festive sprinkles.

DIRECTIONS

1. Let's bake and frost this delicious : Gingerbread Cake!
2. **Preheat : Oven & Prep Pan:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Generously grease and flour an 8x11-inch baking dish (or a 9x13-inch pan, adjusting baking time slightly if thinner). This helps prevent sticking and ensures easy removal of the cake.
3. **Prepare : Dry Ingredients:** In a medium bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, salt, baking soda, ground cinnamon, ground ginger, ground cloves, and ground nutmeg. Whisk until all dry ingredients are well combined and no lumps remain. Set this fragrant mixture aside.
4. **Cream : Butter & Sugar (Wet Ingredients - Stage 1):** In a large mixing bowl (or the bowl of a stand mixer with a paddle attachment), cream together the brown sugar and softened butter until the mixture is light and fluffy. This usually takes 2-3 minutes. Add in the large egg, molasses, and unsweetened applesauce, and mix until all these wet ingredients are thoroughly combined. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed.
5. **Combine : Wet & Dry Ingredients:** Gradually add the dry flour mixture to the molasses mixture in four intervals, mixing on low speed (or stirring gently by hand) just until combined after each addition. Be careful not to overmix the batter.
6. **Add : Hot Water:** Once the flour mixture is incorporated, stir in the hot water until it is fully incorporated into the batter. The batter will be thin and runny - this is normal for gingerbread cake!
7. **Bake:** Pour the prepared batter evenly into the greased and floured baking dish. Bake for 40-45 minutes, or

until a wooden skewer or toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean (no wet batter attached). The cake should be golden brown around the edges and spring back lightly when touched.

8. **Cool : Cake Completely:** Remove the cake from the oven and let it cool completely in the baking dish on a wire rack. Patience is key here-you want that frosting to be on a beautifully cool cake to prevent it from melting!
9. **Prepare : Cream Cheese Frosting:** While the cake cools, prepare the luscious cream cheese frosting. In a medium mixing bowl (or the bowl of an electric mixer), beat the softened cream cheese and 6 tablespoons of softened unsalted butter until the mixture is completely smooth and creamy. Add in the pinch of salt and 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract. Gradually mix in the 2 ½ cups of powdered sugar in four intervals, beating on low speed until combined after each addition, then increasing to medium-high speed until the frosting is light, fluffy, and smooth.
10. **Frost & : Serve:** Once the cake has cooled completely, spread the cream cheese frosting evenly over the top of the gingerbread cake using an offset spatula or knife. Store any leftovers in the refrigerator.

SWAPS & NOTES

Molasses: Use unsulphured molasses (regular or dark).
Avoid blackstrap molasses, as it can be too bitter for baking.

Unsweetened Applesauce: This adds moisture and natural sweetness while reducing the need for excess fat.

Hot Water: This helps bloom the spices and cocoa (if using a different recipe for chocolate gingerbread) and contributes to the cake's moist texture.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Room Temperature Ingredients: Ensure your butter, egg, and cream cheese (for frosting) are at room temperature.

This is crucial for a smooth cake batter and lump-free, creamy frosting.

Measure Flour Correctly: Spoon and level your flour (don't scoop directly from the bag) to avoid adding too much, which can result in a dry cake.

Don't Overmix: Overmixing the cake batter (especially after adding flour) develops gluten, which can lead to a tough cake.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/gingerbread-cake-with-cream-cheese-frosting-a-cozy-holiday-bake/>