

A CAKE TO Celebrate

We couldn't celebrate *delicious.* magazine's 15th birthday without a cake – and who better to create it than master pâtissier Eric Lanlard? This glorious autumnal recipe (there's pumpkin in it, adding a rich, moist texture) is as simple to make as it is impressive... a spectacular centrepiece. Thanks, Eric!



“When the *delicious.* team asked me to design this cake, the first thing that came to mind was the season. Autumn is my favourite time of year for baking – I love all the spices, the flavours and the

cosiness in the kitchen. You can't go wrong with a carrot cake, and this twist on it is a little bit more earthy and rich to reflect the time of year. The ginger mascarpone frosting helps to lighten it up, but it's quite indulgent.

In place of the caramelised nuts, you could decorate it with some beautiful candied fruit or slices of store-bought confit oranges. You could add a little bit of edible gold leaf to make it more glamorous, or even a few berries.

If you're going to invest time in a cake for a celebration, make a big fuss of it – that's what I always say. One of my friends ordered a spectacular cake for his birthday recently and said, 'We're just going to bring it out at the end of the evening and cut it.' I said, 'No! Put it on display, so people can admire it.' ” ERIC LANLARD

Carrot and pumpkin celebration cake

SERVES 24. HANDS-ON TIME 40 MIN, OVEN TIME 20-25 MIN, PLUS COOLING

“It's a fragrant autumnal cake coated with ginger mascarpone frosting and decorated with caramelised nuts – add candles or sparklers for an extra celebratory touch.”

MAKE AHEAD

Make the cakes up to 48 hours ahead. Cool, wrap in non-stick baking paper and cling film and store in a cool place.

KNOW-HOW

Cooked, puréed pumpkin is available in cans and is great for tarts and cakes as well as savoury dishes. Buy it from large supermarkets.

ERIC'S TIP

Be careful not to overmix the cake batter when folding in the chopped nuts and sultanas. The cake needs to be generous and chunky to keep it light.

FOOD TEAM'S TIPS

Make the caramelised nuts up to a day ahead. Wrap a few tablespoons of uncooked rice in baking paper and prick with a pin, then put in an airtight container with the nuts to prevent any moisture in the air making the caramel sticky.

The batter is quite thick. Add extra milk to loosen if needed in step 2.

- 750g plain flour
- 250g golden caster sugar
- 250g light muscovado sugar
- 1 tbsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 300ml vegetable oil
- 5 large free-range eggs
- Splash whole milk
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger, or 1 tsp ground ginger
- 2 tsp vanilla bean paste
- Finely grated zest 2 oranges
- 350g carrots, coarsely grated
- 250g canned pumpkin purée (see Know-how) ☺
- 100g each shelled walnut and pecan halves, toasted and chopped
- 75g golden sultanas

FOR THE CARAMELISED NUTS

- 25g shelled pecan halves
- 25g shelled walnut halves
- 75g golden caster sugar

FOR THE GINGER MASCARPONE FROSTING

- 600g mascarpone
- 1½ tbsp ground ginger
- 4-5 tbsp golden icing sugar
- 150ml double cream

YOU'LL ALSO NEED...

- 4 x 20cm round cake tins, lightly greased and bases lined with non-stick baking paper
- Lightly greased baking sheet

1 Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4. Sift the flour, sugars, bicarb and cinnamon into a large bowl. In a smaller bowl, whisk the oil, eggs, milk, ginger and vanilla.

2 Add the oil mixture, orange zest, grated carrot and pumpkin purée to the dry ingredients, then stir with a wooden spoon or spatula until almost combined. Add the chopped nuts and sultanas, then stir into the batter until just combined (see Eric and the food team's tips).

3 Divide the batter evenly among the tins. Bake for 20-25 minutes until the tops are cracked and springy to the touch. Cool in the tins for 10 minutes, then invert onto a wire rack to cool completely (see Make Ahead).

4 For the caramelised nuts, toast the nuts in a dry frying pan until golden, then tip onto the greased baking sheet to cool. Wipe out the pan, then add the sugar and heat until melted. Bring to the boil and simmer until a deep amber colour. Immediately (and carefully) pour over the toasted nuts to coat. Set aside to cool (see food team's tips).

5 For the frosting, beat together all the ingredients, adding enough icing sugar to make a thick, smooth mix – don't overmix. Roughly chop the cooled nuts.

6 To assemble, put one cake on a cake stand and spread with an even layer of frosting. Top with another cake and frosting, then repeat until all 4 cakes are stacked up. Cover the top and sides with the remaining frosting, then decorate with caramelised nuts. Add candles/sparklers if you want to. Happy birthday!

PER SERVING 472kcal, 23.6g fat (10.7g saturated), 12g protein, 55.4g carbs (31.1g sugars), 0.5g salt, 2.8g fibre

☺ For more ways to use pumpkin purée, see Loose Ends ☺



A BIT ABOUT ERIC He trained in France and was head pastry chef for the legendary Albert and Michel Roux before opening his own patisserie and cookery school in southwest London, Cake Boy. He has made celebration cakes for celebrities and royalty. cake-boy.com

INTERVIEW: PHOEBE STONE

RECIPE **ERIC LANLARD**
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