

Gluten Free Carrot Cupcakes with Cream Cheese Frosting

Ingredients

Carrot Cupcakes

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon [pure vanilla extract](#)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup grapeseed or other neutral-tasting vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh orange juice
- 1½ teaspoons finely grated orange zest
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 cup [gluten-free flour blend](#)
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound carrots, grated (about 1½ cups)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup walnuts, optional

Cream Cheese Frosting

- 6 ounces cream cheese or dairy-free cream cheese, at room temperature
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter or dairy-free buttery sticks, at room temperature
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound powdered sugar

Candied Orange Zest

- 3 medium oranges (about 1½ pounds)
- 2 cups sugar, divided use
- 1 cup water

Directions

Carrot Cupcakes

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 12 cups of a standard muffin pan with paper liners.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat together the sugar, vanilla, oil, orange juice, and zest on medium speed. Reduce the speed to low and add the eggs one at a time, mixing well until each egg is fully incorporated, scraping down the sides of the bowl after each addition.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. With the mixer on low speed, add half of the flour mixture to the wet ingredients. Add the carrots, raisins, and walnuts (if using) to the remaining flour mixture and toss well to coat. Add to the batter and mix well with a rubber spatula, making sure to scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl. Divide the batter evenly among the prepared muffin cups.

Bake for 35-45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to finish cooling. When completely cool, frost with cream cheese frosting and garnish with candied orange zest if desired.

Cream Cheese Frosting

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat together the cream cheese, butter, salt, and vanilla on medium speed. Turn the mixer off and sift in the powdered sugar. Turn the mixer on low and beat until smooth.

Candied Orange Zest

With a citrus zester, peel off thin strips of orange peel from the oranges. In a saucepan, combine 1 cup sugar with 1 cup water and bring to a boil. Add the orange peel and boil for 20 minutes.

Place 1 cup sugar in a bowl. Strain the orange peel from the liquid, add to the sugar, and toss to coat. Separate the candied peels and allow to dry on a piece of waxed paper or foil for several hours.