

RUM CAKE

This is a great-tasting, moist cake that is very popular. I've found that doubling the glaze makes a huge difference. Sometimes it can be too strong for some people - use your discretion.

INGREDIENTS FOR CAKE:

- 1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts (optional)
- 1 18 1/4 ounce package yellow cake mix (NO PUDDING) - Duncan Hines Moist Deluxe is about the only variety that no longer has the pudding already in the mix.
- 1 3 1/2-ounce package INSTANT vanilla pudding mix
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup buttermilk [Bulgarian (not fat-reduced) if you can find it, otherwise any other variety is okay]
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup dark (not spiced) rum - okay to use light, if necessary

DIRECTIONS FOR CAKE:

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. Grease and flour or spray with Baker's Joy or Pam with flour a 10-inch tube or Bundt pan - Bundt is the preferred and traditional for this cake.
3. Sprinkle nuts over bottom of pan.
4. Mix remaining ingredients together well.
5. Pour batter over nuts. Gently shake pan back and forth and tap on counter to ensure there are no large air bubbles.
6. Bake for 1 hour.
7. Start preparing glaze (see below) about 10 minutes BEFORE you remove the cake from the oven as you will want to pour the hot glaze over the hot cake - this will help it soak in better.
8. After removing the cake, poke MANY holes in it with a bamboo skewer or similar long sharp object.
9. Set cake on a cookie sheet (for easy clean up reasons) and CAREFULLY spoon or ladle hot glaze over cake, allowing it to soak in. If desired, you can use a flexible spatula to GENTLY pull the cake away from the sides as you pour the glaze over the cake to allow it to seep farther in. Can also do this around the center.
10. Allow cake to cool almost completely. Pick up pan in one hand and use other hand to tap around outside to loosen cake. Invert serving dish/plate over pan and carefully flip both together. Cake should fall out easily - if it does not, tap bottom of cake pan and cake should fall. Shake gently, if necessary.

DIRECTIONS FOR GLAZE (This IS a double recipe - do NOT double the amounts shown below):

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 Tbsp (1 stick) REAL butter, NOT margarine
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 cups sugar

1 cup dark (not spiced) rum, SEPARATED into 1/2 cup increments. Light rum okay, if necessary

DIRECTIONS:

1. Melt butter in saucepan.
2. Stir in water, sugar and 1/2 cup rum.
3. Boil for 5 minutes - it will bubble/foam up - stirring constantly.
4. Remove from heat and stir in remaining 1/2 cup rum.
5. CAREFULLY spoon or ladle over hot cake that is still in baking pan.

NOTE: If you want a less-strong alcohol flavor, but still want the rum flavor, put all the rum in (1 cup) in at step 2. This will cook out more of the alcohol, but the rum flavor will remain and you will still get a very moist cake.

TIPS:

To prevent burning, you may have to "tent" a piece of aluminum foil over the cake at around the 40-45 minute mark. Use Reynold's Release non-stick foil if you have it.

Be sure your oven's temperature is correct. The knobs on the oven are notoriously incorrect and many ovens vary 25-50 degrees high or low from the indicated setting. Good idea to go to Bed, Bath & Beyond and get an oven thermometer. They're cheap and will save you from many ruined recipes.

Always be careful about serving any baked goods that contain alcohol as it may trigger a relapse in anyone who is a recovering alcoholic. Contrary to popular belief, not all alcohol "cooks out" of most baked goods that contain alcohol during the baking process - a portion of it always remains depending on temperature and baking time. When in doubt, use a different recipe and or be sure to label your cake/item well to indicate alcohol content. Even if you're just using artificial flavoring that mimicks an alcoholic-containing beverage, I would be very careful and label the goods accordingly.

Regarding the cake mix, I do not know how any of the cake mixes that say, "pudding in the mix" will work and whether you would still need to add the box of vanilla pudding mix and if you did, if it would make the cake too moist and therefore, probably fall apart.

I have substituted other flavored liqueurs, such as apricot, for the rum, so feel free to be creative!

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