Orange almond cake with caramel filling

Hello! I hope that you all had a happy Christmas, or a relaxed few days if you do not celebrate it. I attempted to take part in Blogmas but unfortunately I just couldn't get it together and only published four posts. My lovely auntie was visiting from England so we were out doing things or just chatting and spending time together, so writing blog posts did not really seem the right priority as I do not get to see her very often at all (the festive season is all about family!). I've also had to take it really slowly lately because of my health. But I am still going to post as regularly as possible – it was only Blogmas that beat me!

Obviously I love to bake and I always volunteer to be the dessert maker for special occasions. So needless to say, I had been planning what I was going to make for Christmas and how I was going to decorate it for weeks and weeks! My brother gave me some money for my birthday and I bought a few fun cake tins with it. As soon as I received the large bundt tin with a two layer design that allows for filling in the middle of each slice, I knew I wanted to make a Christmas wreath with it!

I decided to try to make a cake that I could eat, though I was unsure

it would work in the tin because the consistency of the ingredients often means the cakes are dense and don't rise. But I spent a long time creating a recipe and it worked! I did have a little panic when I was making it when I went to pour the mixture into the tin and realised I needed twice as much to fill the tin! But I added and tweaked and I managed to fill it in the end. *The recipe below is for a normal baking tin amount*

Obviously you probably won't want to decorate this cake like a wreath now that Christmas is over (maybe next year!). You can easily make this in a normal cake tin. You could slice it into two layers through the middle and layer it with the caramel. Or you could serve the caramel on the side if you just want to keep the baking simple. Depending on your tolerance of sugar (those of us with fructose malabsorption), you may want to go light on the caramel and leave off the icing or just drizzle it thinly.

I hope you enjoy this recipe – it took me a lot of brainstorming and I am actually really pleased with how it worked out. It's yum!

Keep safe for the rest of the holiday season. ***Happy baking!***

Orange almond cake

Ingredients:

1 – 3 oranges (use 1 – 2 in the cake mixture depending on how orangey you want the cake to be)
3 teaspoons baking soda
3 tablespoons white vinegar
1 cup sugar
2 cups almond meal
1 cup gluten free plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoon cinnamon
*Dairy free milk may be required

(I ended up adding 2 1/2 cups of almond meal, 1 3/4 cups of rice milk, 2/3 cup of sugar and orange zest to this recipe to fill the large cake tin, but obviously if you wanted to do the same, it'd be easier to just double the recipe.)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 170 degrees. Grease baking tin.

2. Cover 1-2 oranges in a large saucepan with cold water. Boil for 15 minutes. Drain the water. Add cold water to cover the orange/s again and boil for another 15 mins until soft.

3. While waiting for the orange/s to soften, combine 3 teaspoons of baking soda with 3 tablespoons of white vinegar in a small bowl.

4. Remove the oranges from the water. Slice into chunks with the skin on (If using two, you may want to remove the skin of one of the oranges to give a slightly milder flavour as the rind does make it quite tart).

5. Blend the orange/s in a food processor until smooth (you can leave chunks if you prefer).

5. In a large bowl, beat the sugar with the vinegar mix until thick.

6. Add the oranges, almond meal, flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon and stir gently. At this stage, you may need to add some milk (I used rice milk) if the mixture is too thick or dry.

7. Pour into baking tin.

8. Cook for an hour or until inserted skewer comes out clean. Watch the top doesn’t burn (you may need to cover loosely with foil).

9. Remove from the oven and let it cool completely.

10. You can squeeze the juice of 1/2 – 1 orange over the cake if you want to make it more orangey!

Icing

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons dairy free butter
4 tablespoons rice milk (or any other non-dairy milk)
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
3 and 3/4 cups icing sugar

Method:

1. Add all ingredients in a large bowl.
2. On a low speed, beat the mixture with an electric beater and increase speed until the icing is thick and smooth.
3. If it is too think or thin, add sugar or milk depending on the consistency you prefer.

Caramel filling

Ingredients:

1/2 cup natural unsalted nut butter (I used an almond, brazil and cashew blend)
1/2 cup pure maple syrup
1/3 cup coconut oil
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Method:

1. Add all the ingredients into a small saucepan.
2. Stir over a low heat for a few minutes until melted and combined.
3. Let it cool and thicken.

Assembling

Now the creativity begins! You can make this as simple or as complex as you like. You could even leave out the icing and filling when you just want a simple cake to make.

Optional toppings:

Orange zest
Finely chopped candied ginger
Almond slivers
Fruit

I hope you love this cake. It didn’t last long in my household! Please let me know in the comments below if you make it. I’d also love to hear what delicious baked treats you made this Christmas!