

Carrot Cake Cupcakes with Lemony Cream Cheese Frosting

For the cupcakes:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole-wheat pastry flour or regular whole-wheat flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup canola oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup natural unsweetened applesauce

- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla extract
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups finely shredded carrots (about 2 carrots)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped walnuts

For the frosting:

- 4 ounces Neufchâtel cheese (reduced-fat cream cheese), softened
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. finely grated lemon zest

For the garnish:

- 2 Tbs. finely chopped walnuts

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line 12 muffin cups with paper liners.

In a medium bowl, sift together both flours, the baking soda, salt and spices. In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, brown sugar and eggs until well combined. Whisk in the applesauce, vanilla and carrots. Add the dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Stir in the walnuts.

Divide the batter among the muffin cups. Bake until a toothpick inserted in a cupcake comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Cool completely.

To make the frosting, use an electric mixer and beat together the cream cheese, confectioners' sugar and lemon zest until smooth and creamy. Frost the cupcakes and sprinkle with walnuts. The cupcakes should be stored in the refrigerator, where they'll keep for up to 3 days.

Yield: 12 servings

Per serving (1 cupcake): 230 calories, 32g carbohydrates, 4g protein, 10g fat (2g saturated), 1.5g fiber, 42mg cholesterol, 220mg sodium