

The DISH



VICKI RASMUSSEN

FOOD COLUMNIST
vickir@windomnews.com

Happy fall! Note that I am a little sad that my favorite season of summer flew by like it always does. I'm just thankful we're still enjoying some warm temps and have good weather to get our crops out. And with the season of fall comes any and everything pumpkin and/or apple! So, this week let's feature some pumpkin treats. I will never turn down pumpkin bars or cakes and since I'm not a huge fan of coffee I don't need to worry about putting the spice in my drinks.

I drink mostly water — can you imagine pumpkin flavored water? Ick! I know I'm only featuring two pumpkin recipes but that's all the room I have for this week. I'll work on more pumpkin recipes another time. Stay safe!

Pumpkin Toffee Crunch Cake with Cinnamon Cream Cheese Buttercream

CAKE:

2¾ cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
1 cup packed light brown sugar
2/3 cup regular sugar
3 large eggs
1 cup oil (vegetable or canola oil)
15 oz. can solid pack pumpkin
2 tsp. vanilla bean paste (or vanilla extract)
1 cup chopped toffee bits (I used Heath Bits O' Brickle)

BUTTERCREAM:

1½ cups butter, room temp.
8 oz. pkg. cream cheese
¼ tsp. salt
½ tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. vanilla bean paste (or extract)
7 cups confectioners sugar
½ Tbsp. milk or cream (can use more if needed to reach the correct consistency)
1 cup chopped toffee bits, for sprinkling

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two, 8-inch round pans.

CAKE: Mix the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and spices in a large bowl. Whisk well and set aside.

In another bowl, mix together the brown sugar, regular sugar, eggs, oil, pumpkin and vanilla extract. Whisk well.

Pour the liquid mixture into the dry mixture and mix

on medium until combined. You can use an electric mixer on medium or just a wooden spoon to mix if you want. Just mix until well incorporated. You don't want to over-mix the batter.

Stir in the chopped toffee bits. Spread the batter into the pans.

Bake at 350 for 40-45 min. Cool cake layers in their pans, on a cooling rack, for about 15 minutes. Then turn out of the pans and directly onto the racks and cool completely before adding buttercream.

BUTTERCREAM: In a bowl, add the butter and mix well with an electric mixer. Add the cream cheese and mix well on medium. Add in the salt, cinnamon, vanilla and three cups of confectioners sugar. Mix on medium. Add in the last four cups of confectioners sugar and ½ Tbsp. milk and mix well on medium. Check the consistency. If it's too thick, add in another ½ Tbsp. cream or milk and mix well.

Putting the cake together: Add a cake layer to your cake board or cake plate. Cover that layer with buttercream. Sprinkle toffee bits over the buttercream. Set the next layer of cake over the previous layer and cover the entire cake with the buttercream. Sprinkle the top with any remaining toffee bits.

Note: Keep this cake chilled, since it's covered with cream cheese buttercream. You can set it out about 15-20 minutes prior to serving, so that it will soften a bit.

Pumpkin Butter Cake

CAKE:

2 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup white sugar
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
1 egg
½ cup butter, melted
2 Tbsp. milk
1 tsp. vanilla

PUMPKIN LAYER:

8 oz. cream cheese, softened
15 oz. pumpkin puree
3 large eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
½ cup unsalted butter, melted
4 cups powdered sugar
2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
½ tsp. salt

Pre-heat your oven to 350 degrees.

Mix your flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl. Add your egg, butter, milk and vanilla, then stir until it's just combined.

Line a 9-by-13-inch pan with parchment paper, leaving a little extra hanging on the sides so it's easy to pull out your cake later. The mix will look like dough at this point. Put it in your pan and use your hands to spread it around so it makes an even layer.

PUMPKIN LAYER: Use your mixer to beat your cream cheese and pumpkin until it's smooth. Add the eggs, vanilla and butter, then beat until it's all smooth again. Add your powdered sugar, pumpkin pie spice and salt. Beat until ingredients are totally incorporated. Pour the pumpkin mixture on top of your cake layer.

Bake for 43-48 minutes. When it's done, the edges will be set, but your center will look a bit jiggly. Resist the urge to bake longer, because you'll start to burn your cake! Rest assured that the cake will set up more as it cools.

Let the cake cool on a wire rack for 15 minutes or so. After that, put in the refrigerator so it's easier to cut. Note that if you do put your cake in the fridge, you'll want to allow time for it to return to room temp before serving.

These bars keep nicely in a covered container for a few days. You could also store them in a refrigerator for up to 5 days.