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Carrot & Ginger Soup

Adapted from epicurious.com

Ingredients

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
1 1/2 cups chopped onion
1 tablespoon finely chopped peeled fresh ginger
1 1/2 teaspoons minced garlic
1 1/4 pounds medium carrots, peeled, chopped (about 3 cups)
2 tomatoes, seeded, chopped (about 1 1/3 cups)
1 1/2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
3 cups (or more) chicken stock or canned low-salt broth

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

4 tablespoons sour cream or crème fraiche
1 small carrot, peeled, grated

Preparation

Melt butter in heavy large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion; sauté 4 minutes. Add ginger and garlic; sauté 2 minutes. Add chopped carrots, tomatoes and lemon peel; sauté 1 minute. Add 3 cups stock and bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover partially and simmer until carrots are very tender, about 20 minutes. Cool slightly.

Puree soup in batches in blender. Return soup to pot. Mix in lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.)

Bring soup to simmer, thinning with more stock, if desired. Ladle into bowls. Top each with a dollop of sour cream or crème Fraiche and grated carrot.

Serve with fresh toasts with a spread of goat cheese and chopped fresh herbs.

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Tropical Carrot Cake with Coconut Cream Cheese Frosting

Adapted from Bon Appetit Magazine April 2003

Cake

2 1/3 cups sifted all purpose flour (sifted, then measured)
1 cup sweetened flaked coconut
1 cup dry-roasted macadamia nuts
3/4 cup chopped crystallized ginger
3 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda

2 cups sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
4 large eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 cups finely grated peeled carrots
2 8-ounce cans crushed pineapple in its own juice, well drained

Frosting

3 8-ounce packages Philadelphia-brand cream cheese, room temperature
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
2 cups powdered sugar
3/4 cup canned sweetened cream of coconut (such as Coco López)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon (scant) coconut extract

14 whole dry-roasted macadamia nuts
1/4 cup chopped crystallized ginger

Preparation

For cake:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter three 9-inch-diameter cake pans with 1 1/2-inch-high sides. Line bottom of pans with parchment paper. Combine 1/3 cup flour and next 3 ingredients in processor. Process until nuts are finely chopped. Whisk remaining 2 cups flour, cinnamon, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in medium bowl to blend. Continued...

Preparation continued...

Using electric mixer, beat sugar and oil in large bowl to blend. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Beat in flour-spice mixture. Stir in coconut-macadamia mixture, then carrots and crushed pineapple.

Divide batter among pans. Bake until tester inserted into center of cakes comes out clean, about 30 minutes. Cool in pans on racks 1 hour. Run knife around edge of pans to loosen cakes. Turn cakes out onto racks; cool completely.

****This batter can also be made into cupcakes! You will reduce your baking time quite a bit (almost by half) so keep an eye on them closely.*

For frosting:

Beat cream cheese and butter in large bowl until smooth. Beat in powdered sugar, then cream of coconut and both extracts. Chill until firm enough to spread, about 30 minutes.

Place 1 cake layer, flat side up, on platter. Spread 3/4 cup frosting over top of cake. Top with second cake layer, flat side up. Spread 3/4 cup frosting over. Top with third cake layer, rounded side up, pressing slightly to adhere. Spread thin layer of frosting over top and sides of cake. Chill cake and remaining frosting 30 minutes. Spread remaining frosting over top and sides of cake. Arrange whole nuts and ginger around top edge of cake. Chill 1 hour. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover with cake dome and chill. Let stand at room temperature 1 hour before serving.)

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Simple Glazed Carrots

Ingredients:

1 1/2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1/2 cup water
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 bunch carrots, cut into 2- by 1/4-inch sticks
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

Preparation:

Bring brown sugar, butter, water, and salt to a boil in a 10-inch heavy skillet, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Add carrots and simmer, covered, until just tender, 4 to 5 minutes.

Transfer carrots with a slotted spoon to a bowl and boil liquid on medium to medium-high heat until reduced to a glaze (about 1 1/2 tablespoons). Return carrots to skillet and cook over low heat, stirring, until heated through and coated with glaze. Stir in lemon juice and season with salt and pepper.

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Indian Carrot Salad with Spiced Ground Lamb

Adapted from Jamie at Home from Foodnetwork.com

Ingredients

1 1/4 pounds good-quality coarsely ground lamb
2 teaspoons garam masala
Sea salt
1 pound carrots (mixed colors if possible), peeled
1 tablespoon sesame seeds
A small bunch fresh cilantro, leaves picked
A small bunch fresh mint, leaves picked

For the dressing:

1 teaspoon cumin seeds
3 shallots or 1 small red onion, peeled
1 lemon, zested and juiced
1 heaped teaspoon freshly grated ginger
Extra-virgin olive oil

For serving:

Naan bread
Yogurt
Lemon halves

Preparation

Heat a large frying pan and fry your ground lamb until all the fat comes out of it. Add the garam masala and a good pinch of salt and give it a stir. Keep frying until the meat is lovely and crispy. Shave the carrots into long thin strips with a peeler or a mandoline slicer and set them aside.

Heat a small frying pan over a moderate heat and toast the cumin seeds for 30 seconds - they will start to smell nutty and gorgeous. You're not trying to cook the seeds here, you're just waking their flavors up a bit. Put them into a pestle and mortar and grind them up. Put the pan back on the heat and toast the sesame seeds until golden. Transfer them to a plate.

Slice your peeled shallots or onion wafer thin. As with all salads that contain onion, you don't want to be coming across great big chunks! If you don't feel confident about your knife skills, use the coarse side of a box grater instead. This will almost mush your onions to a puree, but at least you won't come across any big bits. *Continued...*

To make your dressing, put the lemon zest and juice into a bowl and add the shallots or onion, grated ginger, ground cumin and a pinch of salt. Whisk everything together with about 5 tablespoons of extra- virgin olive oil. Pour the dressing over the carrots, add the cilantro and mint leaves, and mix it all together using your fingers. It's important that you have a little taste to check whether the dressing needs more lemon juice, oil or seasoning. Divide the crispy lamb between 4 plates and put the dressed salad on top. Sprinkle with the toasted sesame seeds. Served with naan bread, some yogurt and lemon halves, this makes a great snack!

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Carrot Top Pesto

Ingredients:

1/2 cup toasted almonds, sliced

3/4 cup parmesan cheese, grated

2 cloves of garlic, minced

1 bunch carrot tops, leaves only, discard the stems

Juice of 1 lemon

1 tablespoon honey

3/4 cup olive oil or enough to blend it all together into a thick pesto

salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

For the pesto: Put the ingredients in a food processor and blend thoroughly. Blend it more than you would other pestos.

Tip: You don't want any big carrot leaves, as they can be difficult to swallow. So blend THOROUGHLY!

Recipe Adapted From: The Perennial Plate

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Carrot & Ginger Soup

Adapted from epicurious.com

Ingredients

2 tablespoons butter
3/4 cups chopped yellow sweet onion
1 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped peeled fresh ginger
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 1/2 cups pounds medium carrots, peeled, chopped
1 tomato, seeded, chopped (about 2/3 cups)
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon peel
1 1/2 cups (or more) chicken stock or canned low-salt broth
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons sour cream or crème fraîche
1 small carrot, peeled, grated

Preparation

Melt butter in heavy large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion; sauté 4 minutes. Add ginger and garlic; sauté 2 minutes. Add chopped carrots, tomatoes and lemon peel; sauté 1 minute. Add 3 cups stock and bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover partially and simmer until carrots are very tender, about 20 minutes. Cool slightly.

Puree soup in blender - be careful and use caution as hot liquids can steam and can make the lid come off the blender - hold it down with a towel over the top of the blender.

Return soup to pot. Mix in lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve warm with dollop of cream & fresh carrot.