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Molasses Gingerbread Cake with Cinnamon Whipped Cream

Serves 10 to 12

According to *The New England Yankee Cookbook*, written by Imogene Wolcott and published in 1939, more gingerbread is eaten in New England than in any other section of the country. It was probably one of the first breads baked in New England. A gingerbread recipe was brought over on the *Mayflower*. Many thanks to my friend and cookbook author David Lebovitz for sharing his recipe. I've never made a gingerbread cake as good as this one.

CAKE:

1 tablespoon unsalted butter at room temperature
3-3/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting pan
1-1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon ground cloves
3/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1-1/2 cups sweet unsulphured molasses (not blackstrap)
1-1/2 cups granulated sugar
1-1/2 cups canola or peanut oil
1-1/2 cups water
1 tablespoon baking soda
2/3 cup (packed) peeled and minced fresh ginger
3 large eggs, beaten

Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 350°F. Generously butter and flour a nonstick, 12-cup Bundt pan, tapping the pan over the sink to remove excess flour. (Make certain every interior surface is thoroughly coated so the cake doesn't stick).

To make the cake, in a large bowl, sift together the 3-3/4 cups flour, the cinnamon, cloves, and pepper. In another large bowl, whisk together the molasses, granulated sugar, and oil.

In a 2-1/2 quart saucepan, bring the water to a boil. Remove from the heat and stir in the baking soda. Whisk this mixture into the molasses mixture, and then add the fresh ginger.

Adding a generous cupful at a time, stir the flour mixture into the molasses mixture, until the flour is absorbed. Whisk in the eggs. Pour the batter into the prepared pan.

Bake the cake for about 1 hour until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. If the cake appears to be browning too quickly, lay a piece of foil over the top of the pan. Transfer the cake to a wire rack and let cool in the pan for 1 hour. Place the rack over the top of the pan and invert to unmold the cake. Let the cake continue to cool on the rack.

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Molasses Gingerbread Cake with Cinnamon Whipped Cream, (continued)

CINNAMON WHIPPED CREAM:

1-1/2 cups heavy (whipping) cream
1/4 cup confectioner's sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Confectioners' for dusting

To make the whipped cream, combine the cream, confectioners' sugar, and cinnamon in a medium bowl. Using a whisk or electric mixer, whip the cream until soft peaks form. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

To serve, using a small fine-mesh sieve, dust the confectioners' sugar over the cake. Cut the cake into slices. Place a slice of cake in the center of each plate, top with a dollop of the whipped cream, and serve immediately.

COOK'S NOTE:

You'll need to buy about 5 to 6 ounces of fresh ginger in order to have 2/3 cup of minced ginger. The easiest way to prepare the ginger is to peel it, cut it into small chunks, and mince it in a mini food processor or in a regular-sized food processor using the metal blade. It certainly can be minced by hand; it just takes longer to prepare.

DO AHEAD:

The cake can be covered and stored at room temperature for up to 2 days, or wrap tightly and freeze for up to 1 month. Thaw overnight at room temperature. The whipped cream can be prepared up to 4 hours in advance. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.