Carrot Cake Cupcakes
Makes 12 cupcakes

Treat yourrself to these flavorful carrot cake cupcakes topped with a decadent cream cheese frosting. The cupcake is moist and filled with comforting spices. The shredded carrots and hint of orange zest lend a sweet flavor while the walnuts add depth. These cupcakes assemble easily and are guaranteed to make the day just a little better!

Cupcakes Ingredients:
1-1/2 cups finely shredded carrots
   (about 3-4 smaller carrots)
1 cup all purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup brown sugar, packed

1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce
1 tablespoon orange zest
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 eggs, beaten
1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Cream Cheese Frosting:
1 (8 oz) package cream cheese frosting, room temperature
4 tablespoons butter, room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups powdered sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt

Directions:
1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Prepare a standard 12-count cupcake pan by filling with cupcake liners.
3. Finely grate the carrots using a food processor or a handheld grater. If using a food processor, grate the carrots and then pulse a few more times to make an extra fine texture. Don't over pulse, as the carrots could turn into juice!
4. In a mixing bowl, mix together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg.
5. In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs with the sugar, brown sugar, applesauce, orange zest, vanilla extract, and oil. Whisk until fully combined and fluffy. Add in the grated carrots.
6. Combine the dry ingredients with the wet ingredients and mix until just combined. Don't over mix; this will create too dense of cupcakes. Gently stir in the chopped nuts.
7. Using a measuring cup, fill each cupcake liner 3/4 full of batter.
8. Bake for 16-20 minutes or until a wooden toothpick pierced in the center comes out clean.
9. Cool the cupcakes in the pan for 5 minutes, then carefully transfer the cupcakes to a wire cooling rack to completely cool before frosting.
10. While the cupcakes are baking, prepare the frosting. Using a stand mixer or hand mixer, cream the room temperature cream cheese and butter together for about 2-3 minutes until it's very smooth.
11. Add in the vanilla extract, salt, and powdered sugar. Continue mixing until the frosting is fluffy and reaches the desired texture for piping. For a stiffer frosting, continue adding powdered sugar in 2 tablespoon increments until the desired consistency is reached.
12. Pipe the cooled cupcakes with frosting using your favorite decorating tips. We used two different decorating tips: 1m & 22 to create various patterns.
13. Store the cupcakes in an airtight container and enjoy within 4 days.