

COFFEE COFFEE CAKE

INGREDIENTS:

For the Topping:

3/4 cup (3 3/8 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour
2/3 cup (4 5/8 ounces) firmly packed light or dark brown sugar
1 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Pinch table salt
5 tablespoons (2 1/2 ounces) unsalted butter, melted

Topping add-ins (optional)

1/2 cup (2 ounces) chopped nuts (almonds, walnuts or pecans) lightly toasted and cooled
OR
1/3 cup (2 ounces) finely chopped chocolate (bittersweet, semisweet, milk or white)

For the Cake:

2/3 cup (5 5/8 ounces) buttermilk, at room temperature
2 1/2 teaspoons instant espresso powder
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 1/3 cup (6 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon table salt
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
6 tablespoons (3 ounces) unsalted butter, softened
3/4 cup (5 1/4 ounce) granulated sugar
2 large eggs, at room temperature

DIRECTIONS:

Make the topping

1. Put the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt in a medium bowl and mix with a fork until well blended.
2. Add the melted butter and mix until well incorporated; the mixture should be crumbly. Scrape onto a plate. Slide the topping into the freezer while you make the cake. The topping can also be covered and refrigerated for up to 3 days. Before using, break up any large crumbles and stir in your choice of the optional add-ins, if using.

Make the cake

1. Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease the sides and bottom of a 9 x 2-inch round cake pan and line the bottom with parchment. Lightly grease the parchment and lightly flour the parchment and sides of the pan.
2. Whisk the buttermilk, espresso powder and vanilla in a small bowl and set aside, stirring occasionally, until the powder is dissolved. Whisk the flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda in a medium bowl until well blended.
3. Put the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or in a large bowl using an electric handheld mixer fitted with wire beaters) and beat on medium speed until fluffy and lighter in color, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, beating briefly after each addition. Add about half of the flour mixture and mix on low speed until just blended. Add the buttermilk mixture and mix until just blended. Add the remaining flour mixture and fold until just blended. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and, using a small offset spatula, spread evenly. Bake 18 minutes.
4. Move the pan to a rack and sprinkle the topping evenly over the top of the cake. Continue baking until a pick inserted in the center comes out clean, another 21 to 23 minutes.
5. Move the pan to a rack and let cool for about 20 minutes (a bit longer if you've added chocolate to the topping). Using a thin-bladed knife, run the blade between the cake and the pan until the cake loosens from the pan. Cover the pan with a flat plate or cutting board and invert; lift off the pan and the parchment liner. Invert again onto a rack and let cool before moving it to a serving plate. If any crumbs fall off, scatter them back onto the cake. Serve warm or at room temperature using a serrated knife to cut the cake into wedges. Leftovers can be covered and stowed at room temperature for up to 4 days. For optimal taste and texture, gently reheat before serving (see headnote).

Serves 8-10.

Credit: MVmagazine.com