



ANSON MILLS

Old-Fashioned Oatmeal Cake

Yield

One 8-inch-square single-layer cake

Time

20 minutes to make the batter, 35 to 40 minutes to bake the cake

Baking Notes

This recipe recommends a quick, vigorous beating of the cake batter before the oats go into it—an unconventional approach for a cake, to be sure. But because the recipe uses a high percentage of oats—which have no gluten—the batter itself must be strong enough to support them, otherwise the cake will be crumbly and unsatisfying.

By the way, if you have both light and dark brown sugar on hand, we prefer dark brown for the cake batter and light brown for the topping. Otherwise, use whichever you have.

A glass baking pan doesn't appreciate getting broiled, so we call for a metal one.

If you have an electric knife, use it! It will make cutting this cake a piece of cake.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a digital kitchen scale, two medium bowls, a fine tea strainer, a small saucepan, an 8-inch square metal cake pan, heavy-duty aluminum foil, a stand mixer fitted with the flat-beater attachment, a rubber spatula, a glass measuring cup, a toothpick or wooden skewer, a wire cooling rack, a wooden spoon, and a metal spatula.

Ingredients

for the cake

5.25 ounces (1 cup) Anson Mills Handmade Toasted Stone Cut Oats

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole milk

4 ounces (8 tablespoons) unsalted European-style butter, room temperature, plus additional for greasing the pan

4 ounces ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed) brown sugar, preferably dark brown

3.5 ounces ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) granulated sugar

7 ounces (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups) Anson Mills Colonial Style Fine Cloth-Bolted Pastry Flour or an equal amount *by weight* of unbleached all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fine sea salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 large eggs, room temperature

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

for the frosting

2.5 ounces (5 tablespoons) unsalted European-style butter
2 ounces (1/4 cup packed) brown sugar, preferably light brown
2 ounces (generous 1/4 cup) granulated sugar
1/4 cup heavy cream
1/8 teaspoon fine sea salt
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
3.5 ounces (about 1 cup) sweetened flaked coconut
2 ounces (about 1/2 cup) chopped pecans

Directions

- 1. Make the cake:** Place the oats in a medium bowl and add cold tap water to cover by about 3 inches. Swirl lightly, then allow the oats to settle. Tilt the bowl, then skim off and discard the hulls that rise to the surface with a fine tea strainer. Pour off all the water from the oats, leaving the oats in the bowl.
- 2.** Heat the milk in a small saucepan over high heat until it frankly boils. Pour the boiling milk over the drained oats and cover the bowl. Allow the oats to rest for 30 minutes; in this time they should have absorbed the milk and softened considerably.
- 3.** Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter an 8-inch square metal cake pan. Line it with a sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil cut or folded precisely to fit neatly into the bottom and up two opposite sides of the pan with an ample gripable overhang on either side. Butter the foil lightly. (If you have no interest in serving the cake outside of the pan, don't bother with the foil. Instead, sprinkle flour generously on the inside of the buttered cake pan, tilt to coat the bottom and sides, and then knock out the excess flour.) Set the pan aside.
- 4.** Beat the butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the flat beater attachment until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Scrape down the bowl with a rubber spatula. With the mixer running on medium-low speed, add the sugars, then increase the speed to medium-high and beat until the mixture is light and aerated, about 3 minutes, scraping down the bowl once or twice. Meanwhile, turn the flour, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon into a medium mixing bowl and whisk to combine. Crack the eggs into a glass measuring cup, add the vanilla, and beat lightly with a fork until combined.
- 5.** With the mixer running on low speed, add the beaten eggs about 2 tablespoons at a time, beating between additions, and scraping down the bowl two or three times. With the mixer running on low speed, add the dry ingredients. Increase the speed to medium and beat for 15 seconds to increase gluten development. Scrape down the bowl. With the mixer running on low speed, add the oats and any unabsorbed liquid, and beat until just combined. Detach the bowl and fold the batter lightly with the rubber spatula to ensure no wet or dry pockets remain and that the oats are evenly distributed. Turn the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the surface. Bake until the cake is golden brown, has risen nicely, shrunken slightly from the sides,

and tests clean with a toothpick, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove the cake from the oven and let it cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes.

6. *Make the frosting:* While the cake is cooling, melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat until foamy. Add the sugars and cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the sugars have dissolved and no granularity remains, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the cream and salt, bring to a boil, and boil until the mixture is thickened and frothy (it should register 235 to 240 degrees on an instant-read thermometer), 3 to 4 minutes longer. Remove from the heat. Stir in the coconut, pecans, and vanilla and set aside until ready to use.

7. *Frost and finish the cake:* After removing the cake from the oven, position the oven rack about 6 inches below the heating element and preheat the broiler. With a toothpick or wooden skewer, poke ½-inch-deep holes at regular intervals into the top of the still-warm cake. Spread the frosting over the cake, coaxing it to the sides and corners. Broil until the topping is brown and bubbly, 30 seconds to 2 minutes, depending on the intensity of your broiler. Remove from the broiler and let cool on a wire rack for 1 hour.

8. To unmold the cake, run a metal spatula along the sides of the cake that touch the pan directly. Gripping the foil overhang on both sides, carefully lift out the cake and transfer it to a cutting board or serving plate. Press a long metal spatula flush against a side of the cake with a foil overhang and gently pull out the foil from under the cake.