

Cake has birthday girl going back for seconds

By Kathryn Reed

One would think my reading comprehension would be better than it is at times. Well, at least my memory isn't so good. And skimming is not a good thing to do when reading a recipe.

Had I remembered reading the first paragraph of the recipe, I would not have made the frosting for the cake when I did. (Too early.) And it would not have gotten hard. (Bad for spreading.) And I would have had enough to cover the cake and not have it look like something I decorated when I was a kid. (Good thing mom didn't see this.)



So, that is a warning to others. Pay attention to what the recipe says about the frosting.

Besides how it looked, this cake is outstanding. A ritual started by my parents is the birthday girl gets to pick what she wants to eat on her special day – including dessert. I've carried this tradition with me into adulthood.

With Sue having a thing for maple syrup – she's from Vermont – I thought the recipe below might appeal to her. She said bring it on.

It's a definite keeper.

It is from the November 2010 *Cooking Light* magazine.

Pecan Spice Cake with Maple Frosting

Work quickly to spread the warm frosting over the first layer, stack the second on top, and then spread the remaining frosting over the top and sides before it sets. If you prefer, you can substitute walnuts for the pecans in this luscious cake.

Cake:

Cooking spray

2 tsp all-purpose flour

9 ounces all-purpose flour (about 2 cups)

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking soda

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

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

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground nutmeg

Dash of ground cloves

1 C packed brown sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ C butter, softened

3 large eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 C buttermilk

$\frac{1}{3}$ C chopped pecans, toasted

Frosting:

$\frac{1}{2}$ C packed brown sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ C heavy whipping cream

$\frac{1}{4}$ C maple syrup

1 T butter

Dash of salt

2 C powdered sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla extract

2 T chopped pecans, toasted

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

To prepare cake, coat 2 (8-inch) round metal cake pans with cooking spray. Line bottoms of pans with wax paper; coat with cooking spray. Dust each pan with 1 teaspoon flour. Weigh or lightly spoon 9 ounces flour (about 2 cups) into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine 9 ounces flour, baking soda, and next 4 ingredients (through cloves), stirring well with a whisk.

Place 1 cup brown sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter in a large mixing bowl; beat with a mixer at medium-high speed until light and fluffy (about 3 minutes). Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in 1 teaspoon vanilla. Add flour mixture and buttermilk alternately to butter mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture and beating just until combined. Fold in $\frac{1}{3}$ cup pecans. Divide batter evenly between prepared pans.

Bake at 350 degrees for 24 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pans 5 minutes on wire racks. Invert cake layers onto racks; cool completely. Discard wax paper.

To prepare frosting, place $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar, heavy whipping cream, maple syrup, 1 tablespoon butter, and dash of salt in a heavy saucepan over medium-high heat; bring to a boil, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Cook 3 minutes, without stirring. Scrape brown sugar mixture into a bowl. Add powdered sugar; beat with a mixer at high speed 2 minutes or until

slightly cooled and thick. Beat in 1/2 teaspoon vanilla. Place 1 cake layer on a plate. Spread about 3/4 cup frosting evenly over 1 layer; top with second layer. Spread remaining frosting over sides and top of cake; sprinkle with 2 tablespoons pecans. Let the cake stand until frosting sets.