

Easy Chai Spice Cake with Brown Sugar

Chai-spiced desserts have a way of making any occasion feel warmer, and Easy Chai Spice Cake with Brown Sugar is the perfect example. This cake combines aromatic spices like cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg, and ginger with the rich depth of dark brown sugar, creating a moist and flavorful crumb. It feels cozy yet elegant, making it ideal for both casual afternoons and festive gatherings. Paired with tangy cream cheese frosting, the cake strikes a perfect balance between sweetness and spice.

What sets this recipe apart is its straightforward approach: simple pantry staples, an easy mixing method, and consistent results. Even new bakers can achieve success with this cake, as the reverse creaming technique ensures a tender crumb, while the spice blend infuses each bite with layers of warmth. When baked, the fragrance fills your kitchen, wrapping you in comfort before you've even had the first taste.

Whether you're serving it as a two-layer showstopper or transforming the batter into cupcakes for individual portions, this recipe adapts beautifully. Much like [Best Vanilla Cake from Scratch](#), it's a foundational dessert that feels timeless. Its cozy flavor profile makes it especially perfect for fall and winter, but its versatility ensures it will be enjoyed year-round by anyone who loves chai.

The Allure of Chai Spice in Baking

A Tradition in Flavor

Chai, meaning "tea" in Hindi, is deeply rooted in South Asian culture, where it is brewed with milk, sugar, and spices. Translating these spices into a cake pays homage to that tradition while adapting it to Western-style baking. Each spice contributes its unique qualities: cinnamon adds warmth, cardamom brings floral brightness, ginger introduces a gentle kick, while cloves and nutmeg provide depth. Together, they create a harmony that tastes both familiar and exotic.

Why Brown Sugar Matters

Instead of relying on white sugar, this recipe calls for dark brown sugar, which enhances the chai spices with its molasses-rich undertones. Brown sugar not only deepens flavor but also adds moisture, ensuring the cake stays tender for days. This makes every slice feel indulgent and satisfying, even when enjoyed as leftovers. Combined with butter, oil, and milk, brown sugar transforms a simple spice cake into something truly memorable.

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [65 minutes](#)
- Yield: [12 servings 1x](#)
- Diet: [Vegetarian](#)

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Description

Easy Chai Spice Cake with Brown Sugar combines cozy chai spices, dark brown sugar, and cream cheese frosting. A moist, flavorful cake perfect for fall and winter gatherings.

Ingredients

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For the Cake:

- ☐ 390 g (3 ¼ cups) all-purpose flour
- ☐ 320 g (1 ½ cups) dark brown sugar
- ☐ 15 g (1 tbsp + ¾ tsp) baking powder
- ☐ 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ☐ 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- ☐ 2 teaspoons cardamom
- ☐ 1 teaspoon ginger
- ☐ 1 teaspoon allspice
- ☐ 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- ☐ 1 teaspoon cloves
- ☐ 140 g (10 tbsp) unsalted butter, room temp
- ☐ 100 g (½ cup) neutral oil

☐ 283 g (1 ¼ cups) whole milk, room temp

☐ 2 eggs, room temp

☐ 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

For the Cream Cheese Frosting:

☐ 227 g (16 tbsp) unsalted butter, room temp

☐ 12 oz (1 ½ blocks) cream cheese, cold

☐ 340 g (3 cups) powdered sugar, sifted

☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (165°C). Grease and line two 9-inch cake pans with parchment paper. Soak cake strips in ice water.
2. In a stand mixer, combine flour, brown sugar, baking powder, salt, and spices. Add cubed butter and mix until it resembles wet sand.
3. Add oil, milk, eggs, and vanilla. Mix until just combined.
4. Divide batter evenly into pans, wrap with cake strips, and bake 35–40 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean.
5. Turn cakes onto wire racks immediately and cool fully. Wrap and freeze layers before decorating if desired.
6. For frosting: Beat butter and cream cheese until smooth. Slowly add sifted powdered sugar, mixing until thick and creamy.
7. Assemble cake: Place first layer on serving plate with a dab of frosting underneath. Spread frosting evenly, add the second layer, and frost the top and sides. Sprinkle cinnamon to finish.

Notes

Use cake strips for flat, even layers.

Freeze layers before decorating for easier handling.

Keep cream cheese cold and butter room temp for smooth frosting.

Always sift powdered sugar for a lump-free finish.

- Prep Time: 25 minutes
- Cook Time: 40 minutes
- Category: Dessert
- Method: Baking
- Cuisine: American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 slice
- **Calories:** 480
- **Sugar:** 42g
- **Sodium:** 320mg
- **Fat:** 24g
- **Saturated Fat:** 14g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 9g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 58g
- **Fiber:** 2g
- **Protein:** 6g
- **Cholesterol:** 110mg

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Essential Ingredients

Dry Components

Flour forms the cake's structure, while baking powder gives it a gentle rise. Salt sharpens the flavors and balances the sweetness. The blend of chai spices—cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, allspice, nutmeg, and cloves—infuses the batter with depth and aroma. Sifting these ingredients together ensures even distribution, so every bite carries the perfect balance of flavors.

Wet Ingredients and Fats

The wet mixture combines butter, oil, milk, eggs, and vanilla. Butter delivers flavor and richness, while oil ensures moisture, preventing the cake from drying out. Milk blends the batter smoothly and contributes to tenderness. Eggs provide structure and stability, while vanilla adds subtle sweetness. Together, these wet ingredients harmonize with the spices to produce a cake that is light, flavorful, and incredibly satisfying.

Mixing and Baking the Cake

Preparing the Batter

Begin by preheating your oven to 325°F and preparing two nine-inch pans with parchment paper. In a stand mixer, combine the flour, brown sugar, baking powder, salt, and spices. Cut butter into cubes and mix until the texture resembles damp sand. Add oil, milk, eggs, and vanilla, mixing just until combined. This method, called reverse creaming, ensures a soft, even crumb. Avoid overmixing, which can toughen the cake.

Baking the Layers

Divide the batter evenly between the pans and wrap cake strips around them for even baking. Bake for 35–40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Once baked, turn the cakes onto wire racks immediately to cool. Freezing cooled layers before frosting makes decorating easier and helps lock in moisture. With careful preparation, you'll achieve flat, even layers that are ideal for assembly.

Cream Cheese Frosting

Making the Frosting

Cream cheese frosting pairs beautifully with chai spices. Start by beating room-temperature butter with cold cream cheese until smooth. Gradually add sifted powdered sugar, mixing on low speed to avoid lumps or excess air. Continue mixing until thick and creamy. The tangy flavor of cream cheese balances the sweetness of brown sugar and spices, creating a perfect complement to the cake.

Tips for Perfection

Temperature is key. Cold cream cheese keeps the frosting thick, while softened butter ensures smooth blending. Always sift powdered sugar beforehand for a silky finish. If you want to accentuate the chai profile, add a pinch of cinnamon or cardamom to the frosting. These small touches elevate the flavor, ensuring the frosting enhances the cake without overpowering it.

Assembly and Decoration

Building the Layers

Place one cooled cake layer on a serving plate and secure it with a dab of frosting. Spread an even layer of frosting, then place the second cake on top. Apply a crumb coat to trap crumbs, chill briefly, and then finish with a smooth final layer of frosting. This step ensures a clean, professional look.

Finishing Touches

For decoration, simplicity works best. Dust the top with cinnamon or nutmeg for a rustic finish. Alternatively, pipe rosettes for elegance or sprinkle with crushed nuts for texture. Edible flowers or a caramel drizzle can transform it into a centerpiece. Regardless of style, the cake's spiced layers and creamy frosting remain the true stars of the show.

Serving Suggestions

Everyday Enjoyment

Serve this cake as a cozy dessert alongside tea, coffee, or a chai latte to enhance the spice notes. It's also wonderful paired with seasonal fruits like apples, pears, or figs, which complement its warmth. Even a small slice feels indulgent, making it perfect for casual gatherings or weeknight treats.

Festive Occasions

For celebrations, Easy Chai Spice Cake with Brown Sugar becomes a showstopper. It suits birthdays, holiday parties, or Thanksgiving dinners, filling the room with inviting aromas. Pair it with spiced cider or mulled wine for a festive pairing. Decorate with candied ginger or cinnamon sticks for a seasonal look that matches its cozy flavor.

Troubleshooting and Tips

Common Baking Issues

If your cake sinks, it may be underbaked or overmixed. Always check for doneness before removing it from the oven. If frosting turns too soft, chill it briefly before spreading. Grainy frosting indicates unsifted sugar, so always sift. Spices not shining through? Make sure they're fresh, as older spices lose potency.

Pro Secrets

Freeze cake layers before decorating for easier handling. Use cake strips for even baking and flat tops. Adjust spice levels to your liking—more ginger for heat, less clove for subtlety. Stick with the reverse creaming method for a tender crumb. Following these tips ensures your cake turns out bakery-perfect every time.

FAQ

Can I bake this as cupcakes?

Yes. Divide the batter into lined muffin tins and bake for 18–20 minutes. Frost with cream cheese for chai cupcakes.

Does this cake require refrigeration?

Yes, because of the cream cheese frosting. Store in the fridge, but bring slices to room temperature before serving.

Can I adjust the spice levels?

Absolutely. Personalize by adding more cinnamon for warmth or extra cardamom for citrusy notes.

Can I make this cake ahead of time?

Yes. Bake and freeze the layers for up to a week, then frost on the day of serving for maximum freshness.

What pairs well with this cake?

It's excellent with chai tea, black coffee, or seasonal fruits like pears and apples. Vanilla ice cream also pairs beautifully with its spiced crumb.

Easy Chai Spice Cake with Brown Sugar is the kind of dessert that makes a house feel like a home. Its fragrant spices, moist crumb, and tangy cream cheese frosting come together to create a cake that's both comforting and impressive. With its roots in chai tradition and its adaptability in Western baking, it bridges cultures while delivering pure indulgence.

Whether enjoyed casually with tea or served as the centerpiece at a holiday table, this cake delivers warmth and joy in every slice. Its straightforward process makes it accessible for beginners, yet its flavor complexity satisfies even seasoned bakers. Bake it once, and it's sure to become a recipe you revisit often. From its inviting aroma to its creamy finish, this cake embodies coziness and celebration in one.

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