

Coffee Cake with Pecan-Cinnamon Streusel

YIELD Serves 8 to 10

TIME 1¾ hours, plus 2 hours cooling



Why This Recipe Works

Our streusel-topped coffee cake recipe makes use of a food processor for mixing both the cake and the streusel topping. To make sure our cake was tender despite the aggressive action of the food processor's blades, we opted to use the reverse-creaming method (combining the butter and flour before adding the wet ingredients). This mixing method coated the flour's proteins with fat and prevented them from linking up and forming gluten when water was added to the batter. Building a thick batter kept it from rising over and covering the streusel at the edges of the pan. Finally, baking the cake in a springform pan instead of the typical round cake pan allowed for fuss-free unmolding that kept the streusel intact.

Gather Your Ingredients

Streusel

- 1 cup pecans, toasted

Before You Begin

- * For the best results, we recommend weighing the flour in this recipe. Do not insert a skewer into this cake to test for doneness until the center appears firm when the pan is shaken. If you do, the weight of the streusel may

- 1/3 cup packed (2 1/3 ounces/66 grams) brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (2 1/2 ounces/71 grams) all-purpose flour
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 teaspoon water

Cake

- 1 2/3 cups (8 1/3 ounces/236 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 cup (7 ounces/198 grams) sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 7 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 7 pieces and softened
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 large egg plus 1 large yolk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

squeeze out air and the cake may sink. This cake can be stored at room temperature, wrapped in plastic wrap, for up to 24 hours.

Instructions

- 1.** Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 9-inch springform pan and place on rimmed baking sheet.
- 2.** FOR THE STREUSEL: Process pecans and sugar in food processor until finely ground, about 10 seconds. Add flour, cinnamon, and salt and pulse to combine, about 5 (1-second) pulses. Add melted butter and water and pulse until butter is fully incorporated and mixture begins to form clumps, 8 to 10 (1-second) pulses. Transfer streusel to bowl and set aside.
- 3.** FOR THE CAKE: In now-empty processor, process flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, and salt until combined, about 10 seconds. Add butter and pulse until very small but visible pieces of butter remain, 5 to 8 (5-second) pulses. Add milk, egg and yolk, and vanilla; pulse until dry ingredients are moistened, 4 to 5 (1-second) pulses. Scrape down sides of bowl. Pulse until mixture is well combined, 4 to 5 (1-second) pulses (some small pieces of butter will remain). Transfer batter to prepared pan and smooth top with rubber spatula.
- 4.** Starting at edges of pan, sprinkle streusel in even layer over batter. Bake cake on sheet until center is firm and skewer inserted into center of cake comes out clean, 45 to 55 minutes. Transfer pan to wire rack and let cake cool in pan for 15 minutes. Remove side of pan and let cake cool completely, about 2 hours. Using offset spatula, transfer cake to serving platter. Using serrated knife, cut cake into wedges and serve.



Give It a Shake



When checking for doneness, don't just poke a toothpick or skewer into the cake. Give the pan a gentle shake first to make sure the batter has set enough to support the streusel. If the batter still jiggles, the pressure of the skewer on the streusel may cause the center of the cake to sink.

Wake and Bake

Our Coffee Cake with Pecan-Cinnamon Streusel is great for a make-ahead breakfast. Wrap the topped but unbaked cake in plastic wrap and refrigerate it overnight. The next morning, transfer the cake to the preheated oven, increasing the baking time by 15 to 20 minutes.

A Better Way to Make Coffee Cake

We rewrote the rule book on coffee cake, changing up both the equipment and the mixing method.



SKIP THE STAND MIXER

With a food processor, we need just one appliance for chopping the nuts, mixing the streusel, and preparing the batter.



"WATERPROOF" THE FLOUR

Blending the butter into the flour—instead of creaming the butter and sugar—before adding liquids limits gluten formation, so the cake is extra-tender.



DITCH THE CAKE PAN

A springform pan eliminates the tricky prospect of inverting a streusel-topped cake onto a serving platter.