

Cinnamon Apple Coffee Cake

Yield: 10-12 servings | Prep: 20 mins. | Ready In: 2 ½ hrs

What you need:

- 1 ¾ cups sugar, divided
- ½ cup (1 stick) margarine, softened
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 8 ounces fat free cream cheese (block-style), softened
- 2 large eggs
- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 3 cups chopped apples
- Cooking spray

Baking tip:

You can also make this cake in a 9-inch square cake pan or a 9-inch springform pan; just reduce the cooking time by 5 minutes.

Adapted from Cooking Light.

What you do:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray an 8-inch springform pan with cooking spray.
2. Beat 1 ½ cups sugar, margarine, vanilla and cream cheese at medium speed of mixer until well-blended (about 4 minutes). Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition.
3. Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Add flour mixture to creamed mixture, beating at low speed until blended.
4. Combine ¼ cup sugar and cinnamon in small bowl. Combine 2 tablespoons of the cinnamon sugar mixture and chopped apples. Stir apple mixture into batter.
5. Pour batter into the springform pan and sprinkle with remaining cinnamon-sugar mixture.
6. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 15 minutes or until cake pulls away from the sides of the pan. Cool cake completely on wire rack. Cut using a serrated knife.

Why we love it:

This lighter-fare coffee cake is the perfect choice for a Christmas morning treat. Make it ahead of time; cool completely, wrap (still in the pan) in foil, and leave out at room temperature for up to one day, or freeze for up to three months. To reheat thawed cake, unwrap and bake at 250° for 15 to 20 minutes.

Topping trim down:

Many coffee cake recipes include a heavy butter-laden streusel topping. Easily lighten up the topping with one of these suggestions:

- A sprinkling of crunchy turbinado sugar or cinnamon-sugar mixture or powdered sugar
- Citrus glaze consisting of only powdered sugar and lemon/lime/orange juice and rind
- Fresh berries mixed in fat free vanilla yogurt
- Reworked streusel topping consisting of oatmeal, whole wheat flour, brown sugar, and orange juice concentrate.



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