FOOD & CULINARY

Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly

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Introduction: The Beloved Classic That Never Fades

Few cakes have achieved the iconic status of the hummingbird cake, a moist, tropical-inspired dessert that has won the hearts of bakers and dessert lovers around the world. For decades, home cooks have turned to trusted sources for the definitive version, and one name consistently rises to the top: the **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly**. This particular rendition, published by the legendary Australian Women's Weekly test kitchen, has become a gold standard for what a perfect hummingbird cake should be. Whether you are a seasoned baker or a novice eager to impress, this guide will walk you through everything you need to know about creating this show-stopping cake, from its intriguing origins to the step-by-step method that guarantees success.

The hummingbird cake is a symphony of flavors and textures: ripe bananas, crushed pineapple, chopped pecans, and warm spices come together in a tender, moist crumb, all crowned with a luscious cream cheese frosting. The **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly** is celebrated for its balance, clarity, and reliability. In this article, we will explore the history behind this beloved dessert, break down the essential ingredients, and provide a comprehensive guide to baking it at home. Along the way, you will discover professional tips, variations, and serving ideas that will make this cake the centerpiece of your next celebration.

The History and Origin of Hummingbird Cake

To fully appreciate the **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly**, it helps to understand where this cake came from. The hummingbird cake is widely believed to have originated in Jamaica, where it was traditionally known as "Doctor Bird Cake," named after the national bird of Jamaica, the swallow-tailed hummingbird. Early versions of the cake were a simple, rustic affair, combining tropical fruits and nuts that were abundant on the island. The cake made its way to the United States in the 1970s, and it quickly gained popularity in the South, where its flavors resonated with local tastes.

The first printed recipe for hummingbird cake in the United States is often credited to a 1978 issue of *Southern Living* magazine, submitted by a Mrs. L. H. Wiggins of Greensboro, North Carolina. That recipe became an instant classic, and the cake has since become a staple of Southern baking. However, the version that many home bakers around the world trust most is the one published by the Australian Women's Weekly. The Women's Weekly test kitchen is renowned for its meticulous approach, testing recipes multiple times to ensure foolproof results. When they released their take on the hummingbird cake, it quickly became a go-to for bakers seeking a reliable, delicious, and beautifully presented dessert. The **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly** is a testament to the power of careful testing and clear instruction, making an already wonderful cake even more accessible.

Why the Women's Weekly Version is Iconic

The **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly** stands out for several reasons. First and foremost, it is known for its perfect balance of moisture and structure. Many hummingbird cake recipes can be overly dense or too wet, but the Women's Weekly version achieves a tender crumb that holds together beautifully, making it ideal for layering and frosting. Second, the recipe is written with the home cook in mind: the instructions are clear, the ingredient list is straightforward, and every step is explained in a way that builds confidence.

Another hallmark of the Women's Weekly approach is their attention to detail in the frosting. The cream cheese frosting in this recipe is not too sweet, and it has just the right amount of tang to complement the rich, fruity cake. The test kitchen also provides guidance on how to achieve a smooth, spreadable consistency, which is crucial for a polished final look. For many bakers, the **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly** is not just a recipe; it is a trusted companion that has been passed down through generations, appearing at birthdays, holidays, and family gatherings. Its reputation rests on the simple truth that it works every time.

Key Ingredients for an Authentic Hummingbird Cake

To make the **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly** at home, you will need a handful of key ingredients. Each one plays a vital role in creating the cake's signature flavor and texture.

Ripe Bananas

The bananas are the heart of the cake. They should be very ripe, with brown spots on the peel, as this ensures maximum sweetness and a soft texture that blends easily into the batter. Under-ripe bananas will result in a less flavorful cake and a denser crumb.

Crushed Pineapple

Canned crushed pineapple in juice (not syrup) is the standard for this recipe. The pineapple adds moisture and a subtle tropical tang. Be sure to include the juice from the can, as it contributes to the cake's tender texture.

Pecans or Walnuts

Chopped pecans are traditional, but walnuts can be used as a substitute. The nuts add a pleasant crunch and a toasty flavor that contrasts beautifully with the soft fruit. For the best result, toast the nuts lightly before adding them to the batter.

Warm Spices

Cinnamon and sometimes a pinch of nutmeg or allspice are used to give the cake its characteristic warmth. These spices complement the fruit and nuts without overwhelming them.

Oil, Not Butter

The **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly** typically calls for vegetable oil rather than butter. This is a key factor in the cake's moistness, as oil remains liquid at room temperature, ensuring a soft crumb that stays fresh for days.

Cream Cheese for the Frosting

The frosting is made with full-fat cream cheese, butter, icing sugar, and a splash of vanilla extract. Using full-fat cream cheese is essential for a rich, stable frosting that pipes and spreads beautifully.

Step-by-Step Baking Instructions

Now that you have gathered your ingredients, let us walk through the process of making the **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly** . Follow these steps carefully for a flawless result.

Preparing Your Pans and Oven

Preheat your oven to 180°C (350°F). Grease and line two or three 20-centimetre round cake tins with baking paper. Using three tins will give you thinner layers, which are easier to frost and create a taller, more impressive cake. Two tins will yield thicker layers, which also work well.

Mixing the Dry Ingredients

In a large bowl, sift together 2 cups of plain flour, 1 teaspoon of baking soda, 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon, and a pinch of salt. Whisk to combine and set aside.

Combining the Wet Ingredients

In a separate bowl, mash 3 very ripe bananas with a fork until smooth. You should have about 1 cup of mashed banana. Add 1 cup of vegetable oil, 1 cup of caster sugar, 1/2 cup of brown sugar, and 3 large eggs. Whisk until well combined. Stir in 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract and 1 cup of crushed pineapple (with its juice).

Bringing It All Together

Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and fold gently with a spatula until just combined. Do not overmix, as this can make the cake tough. Fold in 1 cup of chopped pecans or walnuts.

Baking the Cake

Divide the batter evenly between the prepared tins. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. The cakes should be golden brown and spring back lightly when touched. Allow them to cool in the tins for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Making the Cream Cheese Frosting

While the cakes cool, prepare the frosting. Beat 250 grams of softened cream cheese with 100 grams of softened butter until smooth and creamy. Gradually add 2 to 3 cups of icing sugar, beating well after each addition, until the frosting is thick and spreadable. Stir in 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract. For a stiffer frosting that pipes well, add a little more icing sugar.

Assembling the Cake

Place one cake layer on a serving plate and spread a generous amount of frosting on top. Repeat with the remaining layers. Apply a thin crumb coat to the entire cake and refrigerate for 20 minutes. Then, apply the final coat of frosting, smoothing it with an offset spatula. Decorate the top with chopped pecans, toasted coconut, or edible flowers if desired.

Tips for the Perfect Cream Cheese Frosting

The cream cheese frosting is the crowning glory of the **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly**. Here are some tips to ensure it turns out perfectly every time.

- Use room temperature ingredients: Cold cream cheese and butter will result in a lumpy frosting. Let them sit on the counter for at least 30 minutes before beating.
- Beat until smooth: Make sure the cream cheese and butter are thoroughly combined before adding sugar. This prevents white specks in the finished frosting.
- Sift the icing sugar: Sifting removes lumps and ensures a silky smooth texture.
- Adjust consistency: If your frosting is too thick, add a teaspoon of milk. If it is too thin, add more icing sugar.
- Chill for piping: If you plan to pipe decorations, chill the frosting for 15 to 20 minutes first. This will help it hold its shape.

Variations and Dietary Adaptations

The **Hummingbird Cake Recipe Womens Weekly** is versatile, and you can adapt it to suit different dietary needs or preferences without sacrificing flavor.

Gluten-Free Hummingbird Cake

Substitute the plain flour with a good-quality gluten-free flour blend that contains xanthan gum. Add 1/2 teaspoon of extra baking powder to help with rise. The cake will be slightly more delicate, so handle it gently.

Vegan Hummingbird Cake

Replace the eggs with flax eggs (1 tablespoon of ground flaxseed mixed with 3 tablespoons of water per egg). Use a plant-based oil and ensure your sugar is vegan-friendly. For the frosting, use a dairy-free cream cheese alternative. The cake will still be moist and delicious.

Nut-Free Version

Omit the pecans or walnuts entirely, or replace them with seeds such as pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds. Toasted coconut flakes also make a good substitute for texture.

Spice Variations

Experiment with the spice blend by adding a pinch of ground ginger or cardamom. A teaspoon of finely grated orange zest in the batter also adds a lovely citrus note.

Serving Suggestions and Storage Tips

Hummingbird cake is a dessert that shines on its own, but a few thoughtful touches can elevate it further.

How to Serve

Serve the cake at room temperature, as this allows the flavors and textures to fully express themselves. Pair it with a cup of strong coffee, a pot of English breakfast tea, or a glass of cold milk. For a truly indulgent experience, add a dollop of lightly sweetened whipped cream alongside each slice.

Storage

Because of the cream cheese frosting, the cake must be stored in the refrigerator. Place it in an airtight container or cover it loosely with plastic wrap. It will keep well for up to 4 days. Let slices come to room temperature for about 20 minutes before serving to enjoy the best texture.

Freezing

The cake layers can be frozen unfrosted for up to 3 months.

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