

# The Sweeter Side of Spring

- **Lemon Ricotta Cookies**
- **Carrot Cake Cupcakes**
  - **Ginger Cream Cheese Frosting**

Special equipment:

- Electric mixer (optional)
- Cupcake tin
- Cupcake liners
- Box or cheese grater
- Parchment or silicone mat (optional but highly recommended)
- Tablespoon ice cream scoop (optional)
- Cookie cooling rack (optional)
- Sifter or strainer (optional)

At least **2 hours before class**: Bring the cream cheese and butter to room temperature. Measure out all ingredients (keep the ricotta refrigerated after measuring), and have them ready for the class. You'll also need to peel and grate the carrots.

## Lemon Ricotta Cookies

Cook time: 13 minutes. Prep time: 10 minutes. Inactive prep: 20 minutes. Yields: ~30 cookies.

### Ingredients

#### Cookies

- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cups sugar
- 1 egg
- 7.5 ounces whole milk ricotta cheese
- 1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 lemon, zested

#### Glaze

- 3/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1-2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 lemon, zested
- Pinch of salt

### Directions

1. In the large bowl combine the butter and the sugar. Using an electric mixer beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes.
2. Add the eggs, 1 at a time, beating until incorporated. Add the ricotta cheese, lemon juice, and lemon zest. Beat to combine.
3. Fold in the pre-measured dry ingredients.
4. Freeze batter for 15 minutes, or refrigerate for 1 hour.
5. Ten minutes before baking, preheat the oven to 375 F.
6. On a parchment or silicone-lined baking sheet, scoop the batter into tablespoon-sized dollops, being sure to leave an inch and half between cookies.
7. Bake for 12-14 minutes in the middle rack of the oven (keep an eye on the edges, you want them golden, but not too dark).
8. Let cool for 20 minutes before glazing.
9. While the cookies cool, prepare the glaze; in a bowl, combine the powdered sugar, lemon juice, zest, and salt, stir to combine. Icing should be loose.
10. Spoon about a teaspoon of glaze on each cookie (helpful to place them on a cooling rack over a cookie sheet).

## Carrot Cupcakes with Ginger Cream Cheese Frosting

Prep time: 10 minutes. Inactive prep: 15 minutes. Cook time: 24-27 minutes. Yields: 12 servings.

### Ingredients

#### Cupcakes:

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup natural (unsweetened apple sauce)
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 1 egg
- 1 cup AP flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 ½ cups grated carrots
- 4 oz chopped raw pecans (optional)

#### Ginger Cream Cheese Frosting:

- 3 oz softened unsalted butter
- 6 oz Neufchatel (or 1/3 less fat cream cheese)
- 1.5 cups confectioner's sugar
- 1.5 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 oz chopped raw pecans (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 F and line a muffin tin with paper liners.
2. In a bowl with an electric mixer or whisk, mix sugar, oil, egg and apple sauce.
3. Sift the dry ingredients together, including the spices, and slowly incorporate into the wet, beat until just incorporated.
4. Fold in the carrots and the pecans (if using). Using a large spoon, generously scoop the batter into the cupcake pan. Fill the batter almost to the top of the muffin liners.
5. Bake for 24-27 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean, be sure to rotate the pan halfway through the baking time.
6. Remove the cupcakes from the oven and set aside to cool for 5 minutes before removing from pan. When removing from pan, be careful to loosen any edges with a butter knife that might be stuck to the pan. Transfer to a wire rack (optional) to cool completely.
7. While the cupcakes bake, toast 2 oz of chopped pecans on the stove over medium-high heat until lightly browned and fragrant, about 5-7 minutes (be careful not to burn).
8. Cream together Neufchatel, butter, ground ginger, confectioner's sugar and lemon juice until light and fluffy.
9. When the cupcakes are completely cool, frost each generously (about 2-3 tablespoons each) and top each with a sprinkling of toasted pecans. Enjoy!