

Dried-Fruit Cake, Too Good to Recycle

Kekat il-Fawakih il-Mujaffafa

4¼ cups all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon salt

3 rounded teaspoons baking powder

1½ teaspoons ground cardamom

½ teaspoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon nutmeg

¾ cup vegetable oil (such as canola)

1 ½ cups sugar

6 large eggs (= 1 ¼ cups)

2 teaspoons vanilla

1⅓ cups milk

6 cups (2 lb+4oz) dried fruits like raisins, chopped apricots, figs, dates and prunes

1 teaspoon grated orange peel, optional

½ cup finely shredded unsweetened coconut

1 cup toasted walnut, broken to pieces

½ cup ground toasted almond

Preheat oven 375°F

1. Sift together flour, salt, baking powder, cardamom, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Set aside.
2. In a big bowl, beat oil and sugar, about 2 minutes. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition, about 3 minutes. Mix in vanilla.
3. Add flour mixture in 4 batches alternately with milk. Do not over mix.

4. Put the prepared dried fruits in a big bowl, and mix them with the coconut, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the walnut and the ground almond.
5. Add the dried fruit-mix into the cake batter and mix with a large spoon.
6. Grease and flour the baking pan. For this cake, I usually use one long loaf pan 16-by-4-by-4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Two regular loaf pans will also do. Sprinkle the bottom of the pan with the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup walnut. Spoon the batter into the pan and level the surface.
7. Bake in the preheated oven for about 70 minutes or until golden brown, and an inserted toothpick comes out clean.
8. Take the cake out of the oven and put the pan on a rack and let the cake cool completely in the pan. Then invert it and set it aside for a couple of hours before slicing it.

If wrapped well, this cake can stay good in the refrigerator for more than a week. It also freezes very well. I usually slice the cake into serving size pieces, wrap them individually in plastic wrap and keep them in the freezer, and use as needed.