



Greek Yogurt Cake With Honey-Apple-Nut Sauce – Serves 12

This is a low guilt cake. It's similar to a cheesecake—light, creamy, and rich tasting—but made with thick Greek yogurt. The cake is great when you want dessert but don't want to overdo the fat. The sauce is a splurge, but it's a reasonably nutritious one, as long as you don't eat the whole bowlful. Made with honey, chopped walnuts, a green apple, dried cranberries, and warm spices, the sauce is colorful and full of sweet-tart flavor. If you have extra, the sauce is great warmed and poured over low-fat vanilla ice cream or frozen yogurt. Of course, you could just make the sauce and serve it over ice cream for an even simpler dessert than the yogurt cake...

Cake

- 1 cup of cookie crumbs*
- 2 tablespoons of canola oil*
- 4 eggs*
- ¾ cup of sugar*
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract*
- ½ teaspoon of orange extract*
- 2 tablespoons of flour*
- 3 cups (24 ounces) of plain, fat-free Greek yogurt*
- Zest of an orange*

Sauce

- 1 cup of honey*
- 1 cup of water*
- ¾ cup of chopped walnuts (preferably toasted)*
- 1 large green apple (such as Granny Smith), cored and chopped*
- ¼ cup of dried cranberries*





½ teaspoon of cinnamon

½ teaspoon of allspice

¼ teaspoon of cloves

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and coat a 9 or 10-inch spring form pan with nonstick cooking spray. Combine the crumbs and oil and press them into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake the crumb crust for 8-10 minutes and set it aside to cool. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, sugar, vanilla extract, orange extract, flour, yogurt, and orange zest until well combined. Pour the batter on top of the prepared crust and bake the cake for 45-50 minutes or until it's just a little jiggly in the center. Let the cake cool, run a knife along the inside edge of the pan, and remove the outer rim. Refrigerate the cake for at least a couple of hours (overnight is better) before serving it with the sauce.

For the sauce, combine all the sauce ingredients in a medium saucepan and, while stirring, bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat and let the mixture simmer, stirring it occasionally, for about 15 minutes or until the apple is softened and the mixture thickens. Let the sauce cool for 15 minutes and serve it warm over the yogurt cake (or refrigerate the sauce and reheat it, or, if you'd prefer, just serve the sauce cold over the cake). Refrigerate any leftover sauce and cake.



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Fourth Sunday of Advent

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

John 14: 27

Peace

Walk the long and tedious road from Nazareth in the north, rugged and rock-strewn, to the little town of Bethlehem, the traditional home of King David's family line. The land, then as now, was ruled roughshod and occupied by a troubled tangle of people with clashing languages, customs, and faiths. Mary and Joseph, faithful and probably fearful, came to a town overflowing with visitors. And here, to this town that was far from peaceful, God chose to come into the world in a very special way, entering, as the hymnist wrote, quietly, in a world of sin, where meek souls will receive him.

For Christ is born of Mary,
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together,
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all on earth!

("O Little Town of Bethlehem," 2nd Stanza, from The United Methodist Hymnal, Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893)



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In the Kitchen, Fourth Sunday in Advent

Apple-Kale Salad

Pork Shoulder Roast with Vegetables

Steamed Broccoli


Caraway Seed Bread

Cranberry-Hazelnut Torte

Dulce de Leche Ice Cream

This is a classic Sunday dinner. Your grandmother would be proud of you if you serve it. The apple-kale salad complements the pork nicely and is best mixed up and refrigerated early in the day. Caraway seed bread is similar to Irish soda bread and can bake in the oven with the roast. The caraway seeds and raisins give the bread wonderful flavor, whether you choose to slather on butter or not. Be prepared for mouth-watering aromas in your kitchen as the roast cooks slowly and with little hassle on your part. As the roast rests after cooking, steam some broccoli—fresh or frozen—in the microwave for a quick green vegetable. The cranberry-hazelnut torte takes only a few minutes to mix up—no crust, no fuss. If you choose to make the ice cream—a splurge!—start it early or even the day before. The base needs to chill well, and you’ll need time to freeze it. The ice cream’s caramel richness melting over the tart, nut-studded cranberry torte is worth the trouble. And the cook gets the leftover ice cream (if there is any) the next evening (that is, after going to the gym). If you’d prefer less work, you could always serve store-bought low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream. Or serve nothing at all with the torte. It’s beautiful on its own or with a light dusting of confectioner’s sugar if you want to make it look fancier.





DRAFT Apple-Kale Salad – Serves 6+

Here's a hearty winter kale salad. This one gets sweetness from carrots, chopped apple, and golden raisins and saltiness from feta cheese. As with many winter salads, this one improves with a stint in the refrigerator, so try to make it early in the day. If you really don't like kale, feel free to substitute spinach. It will be good, too.

4 cups (5 ounces) of baby kale

½ cup of shredded carrot

¼ cup of chopped green onion

1 large chopped apple

¼ cup of golden raisins

¼ cup of feta

3 tablespoons of shelled toasted pumpkin seeds

2 tablespoons of olive oil

3 tablespoons of cider vinegar

5 tablespoons of apple cider

1-2 tablespoons of sugar

¼ teaspoon of salt

2 teaspoons of grainy Dijon mustard

Combine first seven ingredients in a large bowl. In another bowl, whisk the last six ingredients together for the dressing and then pour the dressing over the kale mixture. Toss the salad well to coat the kale leaves with the dressing and refrigerate the salad for at least several hours. Mix the salad again before serving it.



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Pork Shoulder Roast with Vegetables – Serves 6+

This is a classic, economical pork roast. It's simple to cook and eat, and your home will be filled with comforting, heavenly aromas as the delectable pork cooks. Your grandmother and great grandmother probably made something similar. Gather your family and friends and do likewise.

1 5-pound bone-in pork shoulder, trimmed of excess fat

¾ teaspoon of salt

½ teaspoon of pepper

1 teaspoon of dried sage

1 teaspoon of dried thyme

1 teaspoon of paprika

1 teaspoon of dried parsley flakes

1 teaspoon of fennel seeds

2 onions, sliced

16 ounces of baby carrots or regular carrots, washed, trimmed, and cut into 2-3-inch lengths

12-18 smallish potatoes (red or white), halved and tossed with 1 tablespoon of olive oil



Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Coat a large roasting pan with nonstick cooking spray and spread the onions and carrots on the bottom. Place the pork on top of the onions and carrots, fat side up. Place the potatoes around the roast. Sprinkle the roast and potatoes with the spices. Roast the pork, uncovered, for 1 ½ - 2 ½ hours or until an instant read thermometer inserted into the thickest part reads 145 degrees. Let the roast rest, covered, for 20 minutes. Slice it crosswise, against the grain and serve it with the vegetables.

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Caraway Seed Bread – Makes 1 Loaf

This easy soda bread is flavored with caraway seeds and raisins. The bread gets its moisture from creamy, tangy, low-fat buttermilk. Try the bread plain or with butter and jam. The bread also goes nicely with cheddar cheese for a snack or quick breakfast.

2 cups of white whole-wheat flour

1 cup of flour

1 teaspoon of dried caraway seeds, crushed

1 teaspoon of baking soda

1 teaspoon of baking powder

½ teaspoon of salt

1½ cups of low fat buttermilk

2 tablespoons of honey

2 tablespoons of canola oil

¼ cup of raisins

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and coat a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. In a large bowl, combine the flours, caraway seeds, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Add the buttermilk, honey, and canola oil and stir just until the ingredients are moistened. Stir in the raisins. Pat the dough into an oval and put it on the prepared baking sheet. Cut 4 diagonal slits across the top of the loaf (about ¼ - ½ inch deep). Bake the loaf for 40-45 minutes until it's golden brown.



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Cranberry-Hazelnut Torte – Serves 6-8

This is an old-fashioned dessert, and it's wonderfully sweet and tart at the same time. The hazelnuts toast as the torte bakes and add incredible flavor to the dessert. Beware, though, of kitchen elves. They have a terrible habit of sneaking into the kitchen and trying to pick the nuts off the torte and eat them before you serve the dessert. Bad, bad elves! The torte is best served warm, but it's quite good at room temperature.

1½ cups of cranberries, washed and picked over

¼ cup of dark brown sugar

1 egg

½ cup of sugar

½ cup of flour

¼ teaspoon of salt

1/3 cup of canola oil (or Smart or Earth Balance or butter)

1 teaspoon of vanilla extract

½ - 1 cup of hazelnuts, roughly chopped or left whole

Cinnamon (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and coat a 9-inch pie dish with nonstick cooking spray. Put the cranberries in the dish and sprinkle them with the brown sugar. In a mixing bowl, beat the egg, sugar, flour, salt, and canola oil. Mix in the vanilla extract. Pour the mixture over the cranberries. Sprinkle the batter with the hazelnuts and shimmy the dish a little to settle the nuts into the batter. Dust the top of the dessert with cinnamon, if you wish. Bake the torte for 35-40 minutes or until the top is golden brown.



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Dulce de Leche Ice Cream – Serves 8+

This is a very simple, rich ice cream that is smooth, sweet, and full of caramel flavor. It has a slight hint of maple, which makes the ice cream more than a little beyond the ordinary. Serve the ice cream as a special accompaniment to the cranberry-hazelnut torte above. By itself, the ice cream makes a beautifully cool, melt-in-your-mouth treat. If you'd like a sweet, crunchy topping, you can sprinkle the ice cream with some candied hazelnuts or walnuts.

1½ teaspoons of unflavored gelatin

1 tablespoon of water

4 cups of half and half (1 quart)

1 15-16 ounce can of dulce de leche or caramel sweetened condensed milk

¼ teaspoon of maple extract or flavoring

Sprinkle the gelatin over the water in a small cup and stir the mixture a little to soften the gelatin. Over medium heat, heat the half and half in a medium saucepan just to a simmer, stirring the mixture periodically. Remove the mixture from the heat and whisk in the dulce de leche until it dissolves. Whisk in the softened gelatin until it, too, dissolves and then whisk in the maple extract. Chill the mixture in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours. Freeze the mixture in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's directions. Serve the ice cream immediately or put it in a plastic container in the freezer. Once the mixture is hard frozen, thaw it in the refrigerator for 20-30 minutes before serving it. Alternatively, if you don't have an ice cream maker, you can partially freeze the ice cream mixture in a large pan, break up the mixture into chunks, and whir the chunks in a blender or food processor until mushy. Freeze the mushy mixture again until it firms up and then let it thaw in the refrigerator for 20-30 minutes before serving it.

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Candied Hazelnuts or Walnuts

1½ cups of hazelnuts or walnuts

½ cup of sugar

1/8 teaspoon of salt

¼ teaspoon of cinnamon

Add the hazelnuts or walnuts, sugar, and salt to a skillet with a thick bottom. Cook the mixture over medium heat, until the sugar begins to melt. Stir the mixture with a wooden spoon until all the sugar has melted, the nuts are coated, and the sugar syrup is a brownish or amber color. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the cinnamon. Spread the coated nuts out to cool completely on a piece of parchment paper or baking sheet coated with nonstick cooking spray.

