

## Hunkered Down Comfort from Back in the Kitchen:

### More Comforting Recipes from the Hospitality Committee



*During* these past weeks, we all have been concerned about the coronavirus and its impact on our families, our communities, and the world. We know from our past that by working together, each doing our part—whether on the front lines or helping elderly neighbors or staying hunkered down at home—we can, and will, face the challenges before us and turn this pandemic around.

In recognition of the power of collective friendship during difficult times, we thought we'd share some of our most delicious comforting recipes with you. It's our way of letting you know that we are thinking about our GCA family, although we are miles apart.

Now, mind you, these are recipes for “cakes that comfort” and yummy desserts, not kale or quinoa! After all, baking sweet gifts for friends in stressful circumstances is a time honored tradition. And home-baked cakes, even more so than casseroles, are the essence of shared comfort—at least we think so.

The recipes that follow are ones that we've made at HQ and served at lunch or even at the early morning breakfasts. They are all divine and vetted. Baking together at HQ is a ton of fun for us. We thankfully have new (and desperately needed) ovens, and we are pretty well-equipped to turn out yummy treats in short order. For us back in the kitchen, the process of baking something tasty is often spontaneous and it is always creative. Admittedly we can get distracted with chatter and laughs but we also work hard for hours on end. Most of our recipes are from our favorite cookbook authors—in this case from Nigella Lawson, Abby Mandel, and James Beard—as well as recipes that are old family favorites or from food blogs and television shows.

Since sharing food is what we do on the GCA's Hospitality Committee, sending a recipe when we are “sheltering at home” is the next best thing to being able to bring a sweet treat over to your house. So here's to baking with love and cherishing the incomparable GCA benefits of association. On behalf of all of us on the Hospitality Committee, please stay healthy and safe!

—Gina Brandt, GCA Hospitality Committee, Hancock Park Garden Club, Zone XII

P.S. Two recent cookbooks that are perfect for hunkered down reading are Melissa Clark's *Dinner in French* and Toni Tipton-Martin's *Jubilee* (you will enjoy the historical information as well as the recipes). And next month we'll feature recipes from our Cocina Cubana lunch at HQ. Now that was a really good one! Stay tuned...

## Back in the Kitchen Recipe Box—Flo's Fabulous Deli Chocolate Chip Danish Bread Pudding



*This recipe has both the loveliness of a cake and the ease of a casserole—a rather perfect combination for comfort food! Chocolate Chip Danish pastries are a staple of old school Jewish delis. They are positively addictive. Not too sweet, not too fluffy, not too crisp—just all around deliciousness in every bite. We still get them at delis in Los Angeles, and we urge you to look for them where you are. A good substitute would be chocolate babka (TJ even sells this) or chocolate chip rugelach, which are widely available at markets, delis, and specialty stores like Zabar's. (You may need more custard with rugelach.)*

*This recipe from Flo Fowkes (Hancock Park Garden Club) is her twist on a chocolate croissant bread pudding recipe that she decided to amp way up. We served it for breakfast in March at HQ, and the raves were so extensive that Flo made another for the next day. Both were devoured quickly! Flo says this works for either a decadent breakfast or a divine evening dessert with lightly sweetened whipped cream. We've also made this recipe using individual soufflé dishes and they were a hit.*

### Flo's Fabulous Deli Chocolate Chip Danish Bread Pudding

6-7 Chocolate Chip Danish (they freeze beautifully)  
8 eggs  
2 cups cream  
2 cups whole milk  
2 cups sugar (or less depending on your preference)  
¼ cup frangelico  
1 Tb vanilla

**Cut up** the pastry into 1" cubes and put in a buttered 11 x 13" glass baking dish.

**Mix together** the eggs, cream, milk, frangelico, and vanilla. Pour over the cubes and let soak in. An overnight soak is perfect for breakfast or soak in the morning for an evening dessert. Add more of the custard mixture as needed.

**Bake in a preheated** 325 degree oven for about 1 hour or until the custard is set. Test using a knife, which should come out clean.

**Serve** with lightly sweetened whipped cream if desired.





## Back in the Kitchen Recipe Box—Diana's Sour Cream Pecan Coffee Cake



*Of course there are numerous recipes for coffee cakes with sour cream and pecans. We've even made some of them at HQ. But this one from Diana Samponaro (Green Fingers Garden Club) stood out from the rest. It is simply irresistible.*

*Not only is the flavor perfect with the tang of sour cream and the scent of cinnamon but the texture has just the right amount of richness. This is so good.*

*Diana tells us that this recipe can easily be doubled and baked in a large 10-15 cup Bundt pan (you'll need to adjust the timing) or a large rectangular pan. Just be sure to increase the amount of topping. You could add a bit of chopped chocolate to the topping if that's your preference. As written, the batter fits perfectly in a smaller six-cup tube or Bundt pan.*

*Be sure to make this. Your family will be happy. And you will enjoy the compliments.*

### Diana's Sour Cream Pecan Coffee Cake

¼ lb unsalted butter (1 stick)  
1 cup sugar  
2 large eggs  
1 cup sour cream  
1 tsp baking soda  
1 ½ cups flour  
1 ½ tsp baking powder  
Pinch of salt  
1 tsp vanilla

**Topping:** ⅓ cup light brown sugar mixed with ⅓ cup chopped pecans and 1 Tb cinnamon

**Grease and flour** a tube pan, Bundt pan, or two medium loaf pans.

**Cream the butter and sugar** until soft. Add eggs and mix well.

**Mix the baking soda** into the sour cream and add to the batter with the vanilla.

**Sift the flour** and baking powder together and add to the batter.

**Put half the batter** into the pan, add the topping, then the rest of the batter. Give it a slight swirl with a knife. If using a loaf pan, add half the topping and save the remainder to sprinkle over the top of the loaf.

**Bake in a 350 degree preheated oven** for about 45 minutes or until done. It sometimes takes a bit longer. Let cool in the pan for 10 minutes before turning out on to a rack to cool.

**Dust with powdered** sugar to serve.



## Back in the Kitchen Recipe Box—Hazelnut Apple Upside Down Cake



*This recipe is originally from the 1980 cookbook, Abby Mandel's Cuisinart Classroom. Yes, it has been made dozens and dozens of times in the last 40 years. (OMG, where did the time go?) It also has been adapted and tweaked along the way. Not only is it easy but it is spectacularly delicious. And it never fails to comfort.*

*This is one of the early recipes for the Cuisinart, and it relies on food processor functions. The key is to just barely process the dry ingredients at the end. The other trick is to let the cake cool before turning it out. Then give the pan a shake back and forth to make sure the apples are loosened and flip it over. Voilà! Perfection.*

### Hazelnut Apple Upside Down Cake

3 Tb unsalted butter  
¼ cup sugar  
½ tsp cinnamon  
½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg  
2 Tb hazelnuts  
1 ½ cup unbleached flour minus 1 Tb (7.5 oz)  
2 tsp baking powder  
1 tsp baking soda  
½ tsp salt  
3 Granny Smith apples  
¾ cups sugar  
2 large eggs  
1 stick (4 oz) unsalted butter, at room temperature  
⅓ cup whole milk (sour cream or crème fraîche works too)  
2 Tb dark rum  
2 tsp vanilla

**Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.** Put 3 Tb butter in an 8 x 3" cake pan, and let it melt while the oven preheats. When melted, sprinkle the sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg evenly over the bottom. Set aside.

**In the bowl of a Cuisinart,** pulse the hazelnuts with ½ cup of the flour until finely ground. Add the remaining flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Pulse to mix, and then set aside.

**Peel the apples,** cut in half, and remove the seeds with a ball scoop. Cut the apples crosswise into ⅓" slices. Arrange the best apple slices over the sugar mixture in the cake pan. You should have about 1 ½ cups of apple slices remaining.

**In the unwashed Cuisinart bowl,** pulse the remaining apple slices into small chunks, about 8 times. Measure out 1 cup, discard the rest, and return the apple bits to the bowl. Add the eggs and sugar and process for 1 minute. Add the butter. Process 1 minute. Then add the milk, rum, and vanilla. Process 5 seconds. Add the flour mixture. Pulse 3-4 times until flour just barely disappears.

**Pour the batter** over the apples, smooth the top, and bake for 45 to 55 minutes. Let the cake cool at least 10 minutes, preferably 30. Then gently shake the pan back and forth to loosen the apples. Turn the cake out on a cake plate. (If any apple slices don't come out, just use a fork and rearrange them on the cake.)

**Reheat gently** before serving (a few seconds in a microwave will do). This is delicious served either warm or at room temperature. It's even better with rum favored whipped cream.



## Back in the Kitchen Recipe Box—Lemon Cake with Lemon Cream Cheese Buttercream



*Baking with Pat Fernandez (Newport Garden Club) is always a lesson in creativity for us back in the kitchen. This luscious lemon cake was one of those “what shall we bake now” endeavors. We looked around and saw extra lemons in the GCA kitchen, and then the creative part began.*

*Just look at how gorgeous this became with Pat’s finishing touches! And, boy, was this cake yummy. The lemon flavor is assertive but not overly so. With the tangy lemon cream cheese buttercream frosting, it was utterly delicious. In fact, the frosting was so tasty that it reminded us of those silly fights with sibs over who got to lick the beaters (thankfully back then there were two beaters on a Sunbeam mixer).*

*This recipe is adapted from the food blog, Sally’s Baking Addiction, where it is pictured as a 9” round, three-layer cake. We used an 11x13x2” sheet cake pan instead.*

### Lemon Cake with Lemon Cream Cheese Buttercream

3 cup sifted AP flour (345 grams)  
2 ½ tsp baking powder  
½ tsp baking soda  
½ tsp salt  
1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature  
1 ¾ cups sugar  
4 large eggs  
1 cup buttermilk  
2 tsp vanilla  
1 heaping Tb lemon zest (about 2 lemons)  
⅓ cup fresh lemon juice

#### Buttercream

1 cup unsalted butter and one 8 oz package cream cheese, both at room temperature  
5 cups powdered sugar  
2 Tb lemon juice  
1 tsp vanilla  
Pinch of salt

**Line a sheet cake pan** with parchment on the bottom and crease it so it goes up on two of the sides.

**Whisk the sifted flour** with salt, baking powder, and baking soda.

**Cream the butter and sugar** until smooth and creamy (about 3

mins), scraping the bowl as needed. Add the eggs and vanilla. Beat until combined (about 2 mins). Again scrape. Slowly add the dry ingredients, then add the buttermilk, lemon zest and juice. Mix only until combined.

**Pour batter** into the sheet cake pan. It is thick.

**Bake in a preheated 350 degree** oven for 25-30 minutes, or until done using the toothpick test. Let cool completely before removing from the pan.

**Buttercream:** While the cake cools, beat the softened butter and cream cheese until smooth. Sift the powdered sugar and add to the butter mixture with the lemon juice and vanilla. Thin if needed with additional lemon juice.

**To Assemble:** Split cake in half, add a layer of buttercream, and top with the other layer. Add buttercream to the top. Using a piping set, decorate each piece with a rosette of buttercream and a berry or candied lemon slice.





## Back in the Kitchen Recipe Box—Nigella's Chocolate Olive Oil Cake



*This is another favorite recipe of Flo Fowkes (Hancock Park Garden Club), adapted from a Nigella Lawson recipe. Flo says it is incredibly easy to make. That is definitely true.*

*We made it in March at HQ. We had been chatting about other cakes we might make for Wednesday's lunch and did a quick pantry check. We had everything on hand, even raspberries. Since this was so chocolate-y, we thought this would be a perfect recipe to share with those who like having a bite of the good stuff in their daily life. After all, chocolate is comfort for those of us who are chocoholics!*

### Nigella's Chocolate Olive Oil Cake

2/3 cup regular olive oil  
6 Tb unsweetened cocoa powder  
½ cup boiling water  
2 tsp vanilla  
¾ cup plus 1 Tb AP flour (125 grams)  
½ tsp baking soda  
¼ tsp salt  
1 cup superfine sugar (see note below for regular sugar)  
3 large eggs

**Line a 9" springform pan** with parchment on the bottom.

**Sift the cocoa powder** into a bowl and add the boiling water while whisking continuously. Whisk in the vanilla. Let cool.

**Combine** the flour, baking soda, and salt.

**Put the sugar**, olive oil, and eggs in the bowl of a mixer and beat until the batter is pale and creamy, about 3 minutes. Slowly add the cooled cocoa mixture. Then add the dry ingredients. The batter is not thick. (Note: if using regular sugar, just put it in the mixer and beat for about 3 minutes before adding in the eggs and oil).

**Pour the batter** into the cake pan.

**Bake** in a preheated 325 degree oven for 40-45 minutes, until the sides are set but the center looks a bit damp. Let the cake cool

completely before removing from the pan. Use a thin knife to loosen the cake from the sides, then open the lock and remove the cake. Turn it upside down to remove the parchment from the bottom and turn it back onto a cake plate.

**To serve:** Dust with powdered sugar. Since this is rich, serving the cake with raspberries and whipped cream is heavenly.

**Note 1:** In the original recipe 1 ½ cups of almond meal is used instead of AP flour. This would make it a nice gluten free dessert.

**Note 2:** Some of us bakers do not butter the parchment when baking as parchment peels off easily because of the oils in the batter. Also using a knife to loosen the cake from the sides of the pan makes greasing and flouring unnecessary when parchment is on the bottom.



## Back in the Kitchen Recipe Box—James Beard's Orange Almond Cake



*This is another classic recipe from way back. It is similar to one that Claudia Roden published in her 1968 cookbook, A Book of Middle Eastern Food. It became the rage in 1987, when it was featured in the NY Times. However this version, adapted from James Beard, is our fave. We served it at an Asian inspired lunch we did at HQ (now you know why we have so much fun on this committee). It has a tender crumb with a soft texture reminiscent of a Tres Leches cake. Served warm with whipped cream sweetened with the orange—you'll want seconds!*

*Interestingly Nigella Lawson has a similar recipe but she added chocolate to the orange batter. Delicious!*

### James Beard's Orange Almond Cake

2 medium navel oranges (about 1 ¼ lbs)  
6 large eggs  
2 cups ground almonds (or almond meal)  
¼ tsp salt  
1 cup sugar  
1 tsp baking powder

**Boil the oranges whole** in a sauce pan for 45 minutes to an hour. The longer you boil the less bitter the orange pith becomes. Remove and let cool. Then cut into quarters, and remove any seeds.

**Put the unpeeled orange** pieces in a Cuisinart bowl and process to a fairly fine puree. Not too fine as the bits of orange peel add a nice texture. You should have a bit more than 1 ½ cups.

**Beat eggs and sugar** until thick. Add orange puree, the ground almonds, baking powder, and salt. Mix together gently.

**Pour batter** into a 9 x 3" round cake pan (or a springform pan), lined on the bottom with parchment.

**Bake in a preheated 375 degree** oven for 55 minutes. The cake will be nicely browned but still tender inside. Let cool completely before removing from the pan.

**To Serve:** Dust with powdered sugar and serve warmed up (or not) with whipped cream sweetened with about 1 Tb of excess orange puree or an orange liqueur.

**Note 1:** If you are grinding the almonds (we used blanched almonds), grind coarsely and measure out 2 cups. Then add half the sugar to the almonds and process until fine. The sugar helps prevent the almonds from becoming almond butter.

### **Note 2:** Nigella's Chocolate Orange Hazelnut Cake

2 oranges  
6 large eggs  
2 cups finely ground hazelnuts (or hazelnut or almond meal)  
½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
Pinch of salt  
1 ¼ cups sugar  
1 tsp baking powder  
½ tsp baking soda

Follow the same steps, and enjoy it with lightly sweetened whipped cream or maybe top with ganache and chocolate pailletés. A ½ recipe is perfect in a 6x3" round cake pan.

