

JANICE'S GINGERBREAD

Don't relegate gingerbread to autumn or winter holiday time—it's fantastic served with fresh summer berries, whipped cream, or freshly-churned ice cream out on the patio or toted to a picnic. Janice Wills Smith, Barbara's daughter & my maternal grandmother, loved her desserts. Her recipe box, filled with either hand-written or carefully typed index cards, included an inordinate number of sweet baked goods. I'd make this tender spiced ginger cake if I needed to get on my dad's good side.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup softened butter	1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1 cup sugar	2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 cup unsulfured molasses	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3 large eggs, at room temperature	1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
3 cups all-purpose flour	1/4 teaspoon salt
	1 cup dairy sour cream or plain Greek yogurt

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350°F. Butter and lightly flour a 9-inch tube pan or 13x9x2-inch pan.
2. Cream the butter, sugar, molasses, and eggs for 5 minutes in a large bowl with a mixer on medium speed.
3. Spoon the flour, spices, soda, and salt into a wire-mesh sieve; sift into the creamed butter mixture. Beat for 2 minutes on medium speed. Add sour cream; beat until well blended.
4. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan; bake for about 40 minutes or until a pick inserted into center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes; unmold (if in a tube pan—leave it in a 13x9 pan if you like.) Serve cake warm with honey, caramel sauce, lemon sauce (Janice's favorite), or ice cream.

Baker's Note: I like to stir in some chopped crystallized ginger if I have some on hand.