

GIFT GIVING: This recipe can also be made in mini loaf pans (makes 8 loaves) lined with parchment paper for individual fruitcakes. Divide dough evenly among pans and bake as directed, reducing baking time by 1 hour. Using parchment means you won't need to grease the pans with oil, plus the fruitcakes will already be partially wrapped!

Cranberry, Apricot & Walnut Fruitcake

Makes 2 cakes. Each cake serves 24 pieces. **Hands-on time:** 45 minutes.
Baking time: 2 hours, 30 minutes. **Total time:** 26 hours, 30 minutes (includes fruit marinating).

Don't be mistaken: This isn't your grandmother's fruitcake! By replacing the usual candied fruit with nutrient-dense unsweetened dried cranberries and apricots, we've cleaned up and reduced the sugar in this often-regifted gift. Plus, by marinating the dried fruit in nectar for an entire day and adding a shallow pan with water to the oven during baking, you'll ensure that your revamped modern version is so intensely flavorful and moist that family members will be vying for a piece instead of passing it along. Old is new again!

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups unsweetened dried cranberries
- 3 cups unsweetened dried apricots, chopped
- 1 cup organic crystallized ginger*, chopped (see p. 58)
- 1 cup no-sugar-added organic apricot nectar, divided
- 2 cups whole-wheat flour, divided
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tbs lemon zest
- 1 tsp cinnamon, ground
- ½ tsp allspice
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ cup powdered stevia
- 1 egg
- 2 egg whites
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups unsalted walnuts, toasted and chopped

INSTRUCTIONS:

ONE: In a large bowl, combine cranberries, apricots, ginger and ½ cup nectar. Let stand for 1 day, stirring occasionally, so fruit can soak up nectar and produce a more flavorful cake (don't skip this step or cake will be too dry).

TWO: Line 2 8 x 4-inch loaf pans with parchment.

THREE: Preheat oven to 250°F. Sprinkle ½ cup flour into dried-fruit mixture; stir just to combine. Set aside.

FOUR: In another bowl, whisk together remaining 1½ cups flour, baking powder, lemon zest, cinnamon, allspice and salt. In a separate bowl, beat oil with stevia until well combined. Beat in egg, egg whites and vanilla. Stir in flour-lemon zest mixture until just incorporated, followed by dried-fruit mixture and walnuts. Scrape into prepared pans, smoothing tops. Cover each pan well with foil.

FIVE: Set a separate large shallow pan on bottom rack of oven; pour in enough water to come halfway up sides (this will produce extra moisture for cakes while they bake). Then place cake pans in center of oven and bake until cake tester inserted in centers comes out clean, about 2¼ to 2½ hours. Let cool on racks in pans.

SIX: Meanwhile, in small saucepan, bring remaining apricot nectar to boil over medium-high heat. Cook until liquid has reduced by half, about 15 minutes; spoon over hot loaves. Let cakes cool completely before removing from pans. Wrap well with plastic wrap and keep refrigerated until ready to serve. Fruitcake will keep for up to 1 week in fridge or can be frozen for up to 3 months. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

Nutrients per 1.2-oz serving: Calories: 150, Total Fat: 6 g, Sat. Fat: 0.5 g, Carbs: 24 g, Fiber: 3 g, Sugars: 12 g, Protein: 2 g, Sodium 25 mg, Cholesterol: 5 mg