

Cleo Coyle's Pumpkin-Maple "Surprise Swirl" Bundt Cake with Easy Glaze

Text and photos (c) 2011 by Alice Alfonsi who writes The Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle with her husband, Marc Cerasini



One cup of canned pumpkin, a little maple syrup, and some classic holiday spices convert an ordinary cake mix into a stunning pumpkin-maple Bundt. The "surprise swirl" of sweetened cream cheese brings another level of happiness to your taste buds and impressiveness to your presentation. Serve as a brunch treat with a light dusting of powdered sugar or dress it up with an easy glaze for a lovely holiday dessert and... Eat with joy! ~ Cleo

Makes 1 Bundt cake yielding about 12 slices

Ingredients:

For the Bundt cake

- 1 package yellow cake mix with pudding in the mix (*Note: This recipe will work with cake mixes in boxes from 15.25- to 18.25 –ounces*)
- 1 package (3.4 ounces) instant vanilla pudding mix (*boosts structure and moistness*)
- 4 large eggs
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup (*not pancake syrup*)
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1 cup canned pumpkin (*pumpkin purée and not pumpkin pie filling*)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon (3 teaspoons) pumpkin pie spice (*See page 3 to learn how to make your own*)*

For the cream cheese swirl

- 1 (8-ounce) package of cream cheese, softened
- 1 large egg
- 3/4 cup confectioners' (powdered) sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla



Directions:

Step 1 – Make the cake batter: First preheat your oven to 350° F. In a large bowl, break your four eggs. Lightly beat them with a fork and add the rest of the Bundt cake ingredients. Using an electric mixer, blend on low speed for about 30 seconds. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and increase mixer speed to medium, beating for a full two minutes (and no more). You want to whip air into the batter, and you should see it increase in volume, but you don't want to over-mix or you'll develop the gluten in the flour and your cake will be tough instead of tender. After two minutes, stop the mixer and set the bowl aside.

Step 2 – Make the cream cheese swirl: In a separate bowl, crack one egg and lightly beat it with a fork. Add the softened cream cheese, powdered sugar, and vanilla. Using your electric mixer again, blend the ingredients together. When no more clumps are visible, whip for a full minute until smooth, light, and creamy.

Step 3 – Assemble: Generously butter the interior of a standard 10- to 10.5-inch (12 cup) Bundt pan or a fluted tube pan of about the same size. Don't forget to butter the center tube. *(I don't use nonstick spray for this cake because it creates a darker, harder, less appealing crust.)*

Into the pan, pour about half the cake batter. Add the cream cheese mixture in an even layer. *(Use the back of the spoon to level it off.)* Swirl a knife deep through the layers of cream cheese and cake batter. Make little loops as you move around the entire ring of batter in the pan. Now add the rest of the batter to the pan and level it off with the back of a spoon.



Step 4 – Bake in a well preheated oven at 350° F. for 40 to 50 minutes. The time will depend on your oven; mine takes about 45. The cake is done when the visible layer of the Bundt appears to be baked. If you're unsure, insert a toothpick into the cracked areas of the cake. (See 2nd photo at right.) When the toothpick comes out clean, the cake is done. Be careful not to over-bake.

Step 5 – Cool and glaze: Avoid heartbreak! Cool for a full 30 minutes before removing the cake from the pan. If you try to remove it sooner, it may stick or break on you.

To remove cake: Place a serving platter over the top of the cake pan. Flip the pan. With a heavy spoon or knife handle, rap the pan all over to help loosen any areas where the cake may be sticking, and then carefully lift off the pan. Allow the cake to finish cooling before glazing. (See *my Easy Glaze recipe on page 4.*)

***PUMPKIN PIE SPICE – MAKING YOUR OWN:**

To make 1 teaspoon of pumpkin pie spice, mix the following ground spices: 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon ginger, 1/8 teaspoon allspice or cloves, and 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg.



Cleo's Easy Bundt Cake Glaze

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Ingredients:

1-1/2 cups confectioners' (powdered) sugar
3 Tablespoons half-and-half (or light cream)

Note: Milk and water will also work, but will not taste as rich and may need a bit more sugar to thicken.

Directions: Measure out the powdered sugar. Stir in half-and-half (or light cream) until all the sugar is dissolved. With a wire whisk or fork, whisk the mixture until it appears smooth and without a single clump. Test on a plate. The glaze should drizzle easily but should not be thin or watery, and it should set in about ten minutes.



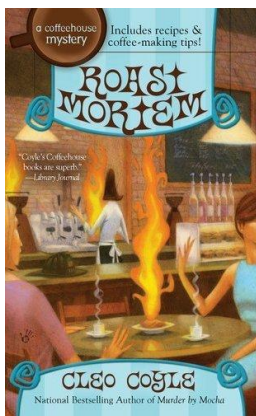
If the glaze is too thin and watery, add a little more sugar. If too thick, add a bit more liquid. When you're happy with the consistency, spoon the glaze over the Bundt cake's top and sides, allowing it to drip gently down.



Quick Tip: You'll notice the glaze pools in the center of the Bundt. When you finish using the glaze in your bowl, take a small spoon and scoop out the pooled glaze at the center of the cake. Continue spooning over the cake. Allow 15 minutes to set and...

*Eat with Joy! ~ Cleo Coyle,
author of the Coffeehouse Mysteries*

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