



CLAIRE SAFFITZ

THE SWEET TASTES OF THE NEW YEAR

SPICED HONEY AND RYE CAKE

Makes 1 Loaf

Special Equipment:

4½ × 8½-inch loaf pan, measured from the top

Neutral oil for the pan

1½ cups all-purpose flour
(6.1 oz / 173g)

¼ cup rye flour (1.16 oz / 33g) ¹

1½ teaspoons baking powder
(0.21 oz / 6g)

¾ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon ground allspice

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg (preferably freshly grated)

⅓ teaspoon ground cloves

2 large eggs (3.5 oz / 100g), at room temperature

¼ cup sugar (1.8 oz / 50g)

2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest

½ cup honey (6 oz / 170g), plus more for drizzling on top ²

½ cup neutral oil, such as vegetable or grapeseed (4 oz / 113g)

½ cup unsweetened applesauce or pear sauce (3.5 oz / 100g)

DO AHEAD

The cake, well wrapped and stored at room temperature, will keep up to 4 days.

¹ Don't increase the proportion of rye flour to all-purpose, unless you really prefer the earthy, savory flavor of rye. You can, however, substitute spelt, buckwheat, or whole wheat flour for the rye for a slightly different flavor profile.

² Use a good-quality honey, the stronger the flavor the better, since much of the complexity of this cake comes from the honey itself. Just don't use buckwheat or chestnut honey, which are overpowering.

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year, a holiday marked in part by the eating of apples dipped in honey to symbolize hope for a sweet year ahead. But I like to think of Rosh Hashanah as the time of year when Jews must endure honey cake, the always dry, universally terrible dessert traditionally consumed around the holiday. Taking inspiration from *pain d'épice*, a French spice bread made with rye flour and honey, I attempted to crack the honey cake code. It required swapping out some honey for granulated sugar, decreasing the proportion of rye flour to all-purpose, and adding applesauce or pear sauce for tenderness, but now I can say that this is a honey cake I'm proud to serve at Rosh Hashanah (or any time of year).

Preheat the oven and prepare the pan: Arrange an oven rack in the center position and preheat the oven to 350°F. Coat the bottom and sides of the loaf pan with oil. Line the bottom and two longer sides with a piece of parchment paper, leaving an overhang of an inch or two on each side, and set the pan aside.

Mix the dry ingredients: In a large bowl, whisk the all-purpose flour, rye flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, and cloves to combine. Set aside.

Mix the wet ingredients: In a separate large bowl, briefly whisk the eggs to break up the yolks and whites, then add the sugar, lemon zest, and ½ cup honey and whisk vigorously until the mixture is smooth and slightly thickened, about 30 seconds. Slowly stream in the ½ cup oil, whisking constantly, until it's incorporated, then whisk in the applesauce.

Mix the wet ingredients into the dry: Make a well in the center of the flour mixture and pour in the wet mixture. Whisk gently just until you have a smooth batter with no dry spots.

Fill the pan and bake: Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan and bake until the top is risen and cracked and a cake tester or toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 50 to 60 minutes. Let the loaf cool in the pan for at least 20 minutes, then use a paring knife or small offset spatula to cut between the cake and the pan along the shorter sides. Use the parchment paper to lift out the loaf and let it cool completely on a wire rack.

Serve: Slice the cooled cake and drizzle with more honey.

