Upside-Down Savoury Carrot Cake

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A tarte Tatin-inspired savoury carrot cake with onions, cheese, cumin and coriander. Topped with roasted carrot halves, honey and balsamic vinegar, then finished with feta and herbs. Author: Lina Giedrė. Serves 6–8 · 20–22 cm tin · About 1 hour 30 minutes in total.

Ingredients

For the carrot topping

- 6–9 small, slender carrots (or enough to closely cover the base of the tin)
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp olive oil (for roasting the carrot halves)

For the carrot filling

- 350–400 g coarsely grated carrots (about 3–4 larger carrots)
- 1 large onion or 2 medium onions
- 4 eggs
- 80–100 g grated cheese (Cheddar, a pizza cheese blend or another cheese that melts well)
- 2 tbsp dry fine couscous or semolina
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- ½ tsp crushed coriander seeds
- ½ tsp cumin
- freshly crushed black pepper
- salt (to taste)

To serve

- 50–70 g feta
- fresh herbs (basil, thyme or your favourites)

Equipment

- air fryer or oven, frying pan, coarse grater, 20–22 cm baking tin, baking paper and a plate for turning out

Instructions

1. Peel the small carrots and halve them lengthways. Before roasting, check how many halves you need to closely cover the base of the tin and prepare enough in one go. Toss with 1 tbsp olive oil. Roast in an air fryer until slightly softened and beginning to brown. As a guide, use 180°C for about 10–15 minutes, depending on the thickness of the carrots. You can also roast them in the oven until slightly softened and beginning to brown; this will take longer.

2. Finely chop the onions. Briefly warm the crushed coriander seeds, cumin and black pepper in a frying pan. Add 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil and the onions. Season with salt and cook over a low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened.

3. Add the 350–400 g coarsely grated carrots and a little more salt. Continue cooking, stirring, until the carrots are soft and excess moisture has evaporated. Aim for a soft carrot-and-onion mixture, like the cooked vegetable topping served with Lithuanian herring. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly.

4. Preheat the oven to 180°C. Cut a circle of baking paper to fit the base of a 20–22 cm baking tin and place it inside. Add 1 tbsp honey and 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar to the paper, then mix and spread to cover the base, without heating them first. Pack the partly roasted carrot halves closely together, with their cut sides against the base: they will shrink further as they bake.

5. Stir the 4 eggs, 80–100 g grated cheese and 2 tbsp dry fine couscous or semolina into the slightly cooled carrot-and-onion mixture. Spread evenly over the carrot halves in the tin and level the surface.

6. Bake at 180°C for about 40–45 minutes, until set and cooked through in the centre.

7. Let cool slightly. Loosen the edges, place a serving plate over the tin and carefully turn the cake out. Remove the tin and baking paper. Crumble over 50–70 g feta, add fresh herbs and serve.

Notes

The quantities are a guide. Use enough carrot halves to closely cover the base; the grated carrots for the filling are measured separately. Add the couscous or semolina dry. Cook the vegetables in the frying pan until soft and excess moisture has evaporated. Total time is approximate and depends in part on the time needed to cook the vegetables. The 10–15 minutes is only for roasting the carrot halves in the air fryer; the 40–45 minutes is for baking the assembled cake in the oven.

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