

Clifton's Date Nut Cake

My adoration of the date/nut combo preceded my introduction to the Rules by many years. I grew up eating [date nut bread](#) (not cake). Whereas date nut *bread* is gentle and tender, this date nut *cake* is heavy, dense, and could be employed, if needed, as a weapon against an unwelcome intruder.

You can use any kind of chopped, pitted dates here. I've pictured Medjools above, which produce a moister result, but you can also use commercially packaged chopped dates. If using moist dates, halve them, pit them, and then toss them with a teaspoon or two of flour to make them easier to chop.

Finally: this is definitely a breakfast cake or snack cake. I wouldn't serve it for dessert.

Serves 8 to 10, or more, depending

4 large eggs, separated
1 pound chopped, pitted dates
1 pound pecans
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup granulated sugar
4 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla

Position a rack in the lower part third of the oven and preheat to 325 degrees. Generously coat an angel food cake pan with nonstick spray. Line the bottom with a donut-shaped piece of parchment for easier removal.

In one bowl, whisk the egg whites until stiff. Set aside.

In a separate, very large mixing bowl, stir together the dates, pecans, flour, sugar, and baking powder.

In a third bowl, add the salt and vanilla to the egg yolks. Beat on high speed for several minutes, until thick and pale. Fold the yolk mixture into the date mixture. Mix well. Then fold in the egg whites thoroughly, so no white streaks show. The batter will be very heavy and tough to mix.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan. Bake for about 75 minutes, or until nicely browned and a tester comes out clean. (Check after one hour and cover lightly with foil if it's getting too dark.) Cool thoroughly in the pan. Run a knife along the inside and outside edge, then invert onto a rack. The cake should pop out.