

# Christmas Praline Spice Cake

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Serves: 5



## Ingredients

- 1 (18-ounce) package carrot cake mix (Betty Crocker is good.)
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 3 large carrots, grated
- 2 cups chopped pecans, toasted and divided
- 1 (8-ounce) can crushed pineapple, well drained
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 24 pecan halves
- 2 (16-ounce) containers home style cream cheese frosting (Duncan Hines has one)
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- Praline Crumbles (recipe to the right)

## Cooking Method



*Using an offset spatula makes frosting cake layers a breeze.*

*For best results, use an electric knife to slice this cake.*

Grease 3 (8-inch) round cake pans.

- Line with wax paper.
- Grease wax paper.
- Set aside.

Beat first 4 ingredients at low speed with an electric mixer 30 seconds.

- Beat at medium speed 2 minutes.
- Stir in carrot, 1 cup pecans, and pineapple.
- Pour batter evenly into pans.

Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 22 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean.

- Cool in pans on wire racks 10 minutes.
- Remove from pans, and cool completely on wire racks.
- Wrap cake layers in nonstick aluminum foil.
- Freeze 30 minutes. (This step aids in frosting the finished product.)

Coat a sheet of wax paper with cooking spray; set aside.

Place sugar in a large heavy skillet.

- Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, 5 to 10 minutes or until sugar melts and turns light brown.
- Remove from heat.
- Working quickly, drop pecan halves, a few at a time, into caramelized sugar, turning to coat.
- Using a fork, remove from wax paper, and reserve for garnish.

Combine frosting, vanilla, and remaining 1 cup pecans in a bowl.

- Unwrap cake layers.
- Spread frosting between layers and on top and sides of cake.
- Let cake stand 1 hour before serving.
- Sprinkle Pecan Crumbles over top of cake, and garnish rim of cake with candied pecans.

Note: You can substitute 1 (18.25-ounce) package spice cake mix for the carrot cake mix, if you'd like. Increase the water to 1-1/3 cups.

#### **Praline Crumbles Recipe...**

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Melt butter in a medium skillet over low heat.

- Add sugar, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook until sugar melts.
- Stir in pecans; cook until pecans are coated and sugar turns light brown.
- Pour praline onto wax paper.
- Cool.
- Break into coarse pieces.

Shortcut Solution: In a big hurry? You can frost this cake with plain frosting minus the nuts and vanilla, and forgo making the garnishes.