

CARROT STREUSEL MUFFINS

MAKES 12 LARGE MUFFINS

Moving beyond the basic muffin, here is a fancier muffin batter with mix-ins and a streusel topping. If you're not a fan of streusel topping, you can top these instead with some [Cream Cheese Frosting](#), which is just as delicious. **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** 4-ounce paper baking cups (sturdy brown paper cups available at baking supply shops)

STREUSEL

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch of kosher salt
- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

MUFFINS

- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup + 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 3 tablespoons sour cream or crème fraîche
- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 4 cups shredded carrots

3/4 cup golden raisins

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

MAKE THE STREUSEL: In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Mix in the melted butter and vanilla until crumbly. Set aside.

MAKE THE MUFFINS: In a large bowl, whisk together the granulated sugar, oil, sour cream, eggs, and vanilla until well combined. Whisk in the flour, cinnamon, salt, baking soda, and baking powder. (The batter will be thick, like a quick bread.) Using a rubber spatula, fold in the carrots and raisins.

Divide the batter among twelve 4-ounce baking cups and top each muffin with about 2 tablespoons of streusel. Bake until the muffins spring back to the touch and a cake tester comes out clean, 15 to 20 minutes; rotate the pan front to back halfway through. Let cool in the cups on a wire rack.

ROYAL ICING

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

This classic icing is great for decorating both cookies and cakes. It's a must-have recipe and incredibly handy if you need to write something on your cake or cookie (see "[Decorating with Icing](#)"). As the icing sits, it will dry and form a skin, so if not using it right away—or if it's on standby to be used soon—place a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface of the icing to keep it from drying out on you and keep at room temperature.

4½ cups confectioners' sugar

3 large egg whites

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

½ teaspoon cream of tartar

Pinch of kosher salt

Food coloring of your choice

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, mix the sugar, egg whites, and vanilla on low speed until incorporated. Stop the mixer to scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula, then add the cream of tartar and salt and continue mixing until smooth and silky.

Color the royal icing as desired. Use it right away or transfer to a container and cover the icing with a sheet of plastic wrap pressed directly on its surface. Use within 2 hours.

INSIDER TIP • FLOOD-OUT ICING

You can use royal icing to decorate large surfaces on cut-out cookies. Start by piping an outline of the shape you want with the regular royal icing. Then you “flood out” the remaining icing by adding enough water to make it runny, like a glaze. Then you pipe the flood-out icing within the lines.

