

## Christmas Gingerbread Loaf

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup white sugar
- zest from 1 large orange
- 1/8 tsp orange extract
  
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground cloves
- 2 1/4 tsp powdered ginger
- 1 tsp salt
  
- 1 cup applesauce
- 1 tsp baking soda



### Frosting

- 1 (8 oz) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp orange extract
- 2 1/2 cups icing (confectioner's) sugar or more
- Candied citrus or orange peel

### Directions

Preheat oven to 350F.

In a medium bowl, sift together flour, cinnamon, cloves, ginger and salt.

In a large bowl, mix butter and sugar together until creamy and fluffy. Beat in orange zest and extract.

In a small bowl, stir the baking soda into the applesauce. Add to the creamed butter mixture.

Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture, beating slowly until the batter is completely mixed and smooth.

Spoon batter into prepared loaf pans or a 9x9" square pan.

Bake for 35 minutes if using small loaf pans or 40 – 50 minutes for a larger pan. Cake is done if toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

### Frosting

Beat cream cheese until fluffy. Beat in vanilla and orange extracts.

Slowly beat in icing sugar. Add additional sugar as needed until the icing is the right consistency for spreading and holding it's shape on the cake.  
Ice the cakes once they have completely cooled.

Press candied citrus peel into the top of the icing.

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