

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
- Cook Time: 55 minutes
- Resting Time: 15 minutes
- Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes
- Yield: 10 to 12 slices
- Difficulty Level: Easy
- Intensity Level: Low (Gentle folding and basic assembly)

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Ingredients

Wet Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups (225g) fresh carrots, peeled and finely grated
- 1 cup (175g) pitted Medjool dates, chopped into small pieces
- ½ cup (120ml) boiling water (for soaking dates)
- ⅓ cup (80ml) neutral vegetable oil (or melted coconut oil)
- ⅓ cup (80ml) pure maple syrup or liquid honey
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Dry Ingredients

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups (210g) all-purpose flour (or whole wheat pastry flour)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fine sea salt

Optional Mix-Ins & Topping

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (60g) raw walnuts or pecans, chopped
- 2 tablespoons rolled oats or pumpkin seeds (for topping the loaf before baking)

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prep and Soak

Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease a standard 8.5×4.5-inch or 9×5-inch loaf pan with butter or cooking spray, and line it with parchment paper, leaving an overhang on the long sides for easy removal later. Place the chopped dates in a small heatproof bowl, pour the ½ cup of boiling water over them, and set aside for 10 minutes to soften.

Step 2: Mix the Dry Ingredients

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, baking powder, baking soda, ground cinnamon, ground nutmeg, ground ginger, and sea salt until thoroughly combined and free of lumps.

Step 3: Combine the Wet Ingredients

In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the eggs, vegetable oil, maple syrup, and vanilla extract until smooth and unified. Pour in the softened dates along with any remaining soaking liquid, then stir in the finely grated carrots.

Step 4: Form the Batter

Pour the wet carrot-and-date mixture into the bowl with the dry ingredients. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold the mixture together using light, sweeping motions. If you are adding chopped walnuts or pecans, fold them in now. Stop mixing as soon as the last streak of flour disappears.

Step 5: Fill and Decorate

Spoon the batter into your prepared loaf pan, using your spatula to smooth the top into an even layer. If desired, sprinkle rolled oats or pumpkin seeds evenly over the surface for an artisan finish.

Step 6: Bake

Place the pan on the center rack of your preheated oven and bake for 50 to 60 minutes. At the 35-minute mark, check the loaf; if the top is browning too quickly, tent a piece of aluminum foil loosely over the pan. The loaf is done when a toothpick or wooden skewer inserted into the center comes out clean or with just a few moist crumbs attached.

Step 7: Cool and Serve

Remove the loaf from the oven and set the pan on a wire cooling rack for 15 minutes. Use the parchment paper handles to lift the loaf out of the pan and onto the rack to cool completely before slicing. Slicing while warm can cause the loaf to crumble, so patience pays off!

Storage and Freezing Instructions

- Room Temperature: Store cooled slices or the whole loaf in an airtight container lined with a paper towel for up to 4 days.
- Refrigerator: Keep in an airtight container for up to 1 week. Warm individual slices briefly in a toaster or microwave before serving.
- Freezing: Wrap the fully cooled loaf (or individual slices separated by parchment paper) tightly in plastic wrap, then wrap in aluminum foil. Freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator or at room temperature.

Estimated Nutrition Information

Serving Size: 1 slice (based on 10 slices per loaf)

- Calories: 225 kcal
- Total Fat: 8.5 g
 - Saturated Fat: 1.2 g
 - Trans Fat: 0 g
- Sodium: 210 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 34 g
 - Dietary Fiber: 3.5 g
 - Total Sugars: 16 g (primarily natural fruit sugars from dates and carrots)
- Protein: 4.5 g
- Vitamin A: 2100 IU
- Calcium: 45 mg
- Iron: 1.4 mg