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A Sweet Thanksgiving...Chocolate, Pumpkin Bundt Cake

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This Thanksgiving will be so sweet! It'll be the first time I celebrate the official 'day of thanks' with my amazing NEW husband…did I just type that out loud!? It still surprises me from time to time when I realize all over again that I am living the life of a WIFE! What does that mean to me?

The world. That's all…and that's everything. I have 'my person' to do each day with…to do life with. Not that my kids, friends and family weren't enough for me. I'd grown content with widowhood and my self-proclaimed calling to singlehood. *Not that GOD wasn't enough for me.* He always filled me up to overflowing! But, He shifted the gears of my life again and gave me someone to hold hands with, to walk in step with and (most importantly) to grow in faith with. How could I turn that down...especially when He molded such a good fit for me?!

Dare I say, it's my own little form of redemption from the Redeemer Himself? It's a second chance and I won't waste it. NOPE…I refuse. Just ask my husband. Every morning snuggle, every time I'm able to treat him with something healthy (and sweet!), every chance I have to encourage and every day when I pray I savor each fresh opportunity to thank God I've got someone to give to again.

And here's the thing about second chances…..sometimes they feel like the first time.




Now, I don’t mean to paint this blissful picture of perfection. We experience our own version of strange and surreal moments (the eyes wide like we are deer looking into headlights kind of moments). We're often reminded how we both leapt from a life of singlehood into a life of two very independent individuals woven together as one….and we both brought with us kids to weave into this crazy new life! There’s no real time to ‘warm-up and stretch' into a quiet life as young newlyweds.

First of all, we aren’t so young! We started full throttle, sprinting from a starting block of obligations: Five girls between us, homes to keep (one to rent), school schedules, extracurriculars, social lives and finances to combine, established professional roles to balance with new relationship needs, and the list goes on. It all feels a bit off balance on occasion (at least once a day to be exact)…and, speaking for myself, *I’ve landed hard on the ground of unrealistic expectations and found myself a bit exhausted.*

But our flaws and faults, our oversights and slipups, our imperfections and all the craziness of combining families create the most beautiful parts of who we are as ONE. WHY? Because they bless us with ways to build solid foundation beneath our feet. The way we deal with each twist and turn builds us up today and into who we will become as a couple. And the only way we’ve found to fit us so far is to give each issue to God because we already know alone we don’t have what it takes.

Even if we struggle and flail in our inexperience, we know God’s already got a sound solution when we surrender to Him. Even if we crash a bit as our worlds continue to combine, ***our Creator already knows how to use our messes to mold us.*** Each time we lean on the Lord we learn more and more how perfectly He crafted this crazy, beautiful blessing.

Now, I'm sure God shakes His head when He sees how we handle it sometimes. And I'm pretty sure He watches us with humor in His heart and wisdom He's waiting to hand down ***as soon as we remove our white knuckled grips from the wheel and allow Him to do the driving.***

(OK, God, I admit, I've tried to drive this thing alone….so take the wheel because I clearly don't have a license to drive in this unchartered territory. In fact, without Your direction I know we are doomed to follow the wrong path. So take control and we commit to follow Your call!)

Anyway, I guess what I'm really getting at in all this rambling is that our complicated tapestry is just what my soul longed for….and I never even knew it! It's incredible to look back and see God's hand in everything, His perfect orchestration even amidst times when I felt like all my life was a mess. ***From His sovereign vantage point, my mess was always His masterpiece.*** AMAZING!

That's what makes this Thanksgiving so sweet. I'm filled with gratitude for God's great plan! A plan I never expected and a purpose I'd never have proposed. And, so with love pumping my heart and gratitude satisfying my soul, I'm planning to celebrate my first sweet Thanksgiving alongside my sweet new man.

Of course, I've got a recipe to go along with my theme! In honor of my sweet Thanksgiving, I thought I'd add some healthy sweetness to your dessert repertoire. This Bundt cake looks beautiful on the table, and offers a hint of traditional pumpkin flavor with chocolate's decadent flair.

Recipe category

Sinless Sweet Treats [1]

Restricted to members

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Ingredients

- 1 ¾ cup whole wheat pastry flour (*SEE NOTES)
- 1 cup sucanaut (or you can use organic white sugar)
- ¾ cup cocoa powder (I use free-trade, organic cocoa)
- 1 ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ginger
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup almond milk (or I have also used organic buttermilk..when it didn't matter if it was dairy free)
- 1 15 ounce can pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)
- ¾ cup coconut sugar
- 1 large egg and 1 egg white (or you can use flax egg substitute-See Notes)
- ½ cup applesauce
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- GLAZE and Garnish:
- ½ cup organic powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon almond (or other) milk
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

- 3 to 4 tablespoons mini dark chocolate chips or toasted, chopped almonds

Recipe Instructions

- Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Prepare a Bundt cake pan with nonstick cooking spray or butter and flour.
- Whisk all dry ingredients (up through salt) in a medium bowl.
- Blend milk, pumpkin and coconut sugar in a large mixing bowl of a stand mixer or using hand mixer.
- Beat in the egg or egg substitute. Stir in or beat on low speed adding the vanilla and applesauce.
- Gradually add dry ingredients to the mixing bowl with wet ingredients.
- Carefully pour the batter into the prepared pan.
- Bake cake for an hour to hour and 15 minutes, until skewer comes out with a few moist crumbs on it.
- Cool on a cooling rack for 15 minutes and gently flip cake out on to your serving dish or where it will be stored. Cool cake before putting the glaze on.
- MAKE THE GLAZE: Combine the sugar, milk and cinnamon in a bowl and whisk or beat well. Add more sugar if too runny or milk if too thick. Drizzle over the cake and sprinkle the chips or almonds on top while glaze is still moist.
- ENJOY!

Featured Image



Gallery



Recipe Notes

*I have made this recipe with different flour combinations. I have used a gluten free flour blend to

replace all the pastry flour (1:1) and I have used ¾ cup quinoa flour to replace ¾ cup of the pastry flour to make for a higher protein/lower glycemic treat. Both turned out well! Just beware that quinoa flour has a bit of a different flavor. My kids and I loved it...but I've met people who turn their noses up to this modification.

*To use the flax egg substitute for this recipe, in a small dish stir 2 tablespoons of milled/ground flax with 5 tablespoons of warm water and let sit for a few minutes to thicken.

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