



# Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake

## The Heart of the Cake

Let's start with the cranberries. They are the soul of this cake. I cook them down with orange juice and sugar. The kitchen fills with a sweet, tangy smell. Doesn't that smell amazing?

The berries pop and soften into a ruby jam. This matters because that jam will swirl through your cake. It gives you little pockets of bright flavor. It keeps every bite interesting.

## A Little Kitchen Magic

Now for the batter. You cream the butter and sugar. It becomes pale

and fluffy like a cloud. I still laugh at that. My grandson once called it “butter snow.”

Then you add the ground pecans and spice. *Fun fact: grinding the nuts yourself makes the cake wonderfully moist.* It soaks up all the good buttermilk. This creates a tender crumb. Do you have a favorite nut you like to bake with?

## **The Swirl That Tells a Story**

Here is the fun part. You layer the batter and the cranberry filling. Then you take a knife and swirl. Do not be shy. Make big, bold swirls.

This matters. It is not just pretty. It means every slice will be different. Someone might get more cranberry. Another gets more spiced cake. It is a little surprise for everyone. What is your favorite part of decorating a cake?

## **Patience is a Warm Cake**

The cake bakes for over an hour. The waiting is the hardest part. Your whole house will smell like holidays. That smell is part of the gift.

Let it cool completely. I know it is tempting to cut it warm. But a patient cake holds together. It lets the flavors settle and become friends. Then it is ready for its final dress.

## **The Final Touch**

The glaze is simple. Just cream cheese, milk, and sugar. You whisk it until smooth. Then you drizzle it over the cooled cake.

It drips down all those curves. It makes the cake look so special. This

last step says, "This was made with love." Will you be sharing this cake with family or friends this season?

## Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
<b>Filling:</b>		
Cranberries (fresh or frozen)	8 oz (227g / 2 cups)	
Granulated sugar	½ cup (3½ oz / 99g)	
Orange juice	½ cup	
<b>Cake:</b>		
All-purpose flour	3 cups (15 oz / 425g)	
Table salt	1 teaspoon	
Baking powder	1 teaspoon	
Baking soda	½ teaspoon	
Buttermilk	¾ cup	Room temperature
Vanilla extract	1 tablespoon	
Lemon juice	1 tablespoon	
Unsalted butter	18 tbsp (2¼ sticks)	Cut into pieces, softened
Sugar	2 cups (14 oz / 397g)	
Large eggs	3	Room temperature
Large egg yolk	1	Room temperature
Pecans	1½ cups	Toasted, cooled, and ground fine
Pumpkin pie spice	1 tablespoon	
<b>Glaze:</b>		
Cream cheese	2 tablespoons	Softened
Whole milk	2 tablespoons	

<b>Ingredient</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Confectioners' sugar	1 cup (4 oz / 113g)	



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Hello, my dear. Come sit at the table. I want to tell you about my holiday cake. It is full of sweet cranberries and toasty pecans. The smell fills the whole house with warmth. It reminds me of my own grandmother's kitchen. She always had a cake waiting. This one is special. It has a pretty swirl inside and a sweet glaze on top. Making it feels like a cozy hug. Doesn't that sound nice? Let's bake some memories together.

See also [Smoked Sweet Potato Holiday Mash](#)

## Instructions

**Step 1:** First, let's make the filling. Put the cranberries, sugar, and orange juice in a pot. Cook it until the berries pop and get thick. Then blend it smooth. Let it cool completely. I still laugh at the popping sounds. (A cool filling won't sink your cake batter!)

**Step 2:** Now, heat your oven to 325 degrees. Grease your Bundt pan very well. Mix your dry ingredients in one bowl. In another, mix the buttermilk, vanilla, and lemon juice. This makes the cake tender. My tip is to use a pastry brush for the pan. It gets into all the nooks.

**Step 3:** Time for the mixer! Beat the soft butter and sugar until fluffy. Add the eggs, one by one. Then mix in the dry and wet mixtures, alternating. The batter will smell amazing. What does adding eggs one at a time prevent? Share below!

**Step 4:** Stir the ground pecans and pumpkin pie spice into the batter. Spoon half into your pan. Make a little channel with a spoon. Add half

the filling and swirl it with a knife. Repeat with the rest. Bake for about 70 minutes. (Rotating the pan gives you even browning.) Let it cool completely.

**Step 5:** Finally, the glaze! Whisk the soft cream cheese and milk together. Add the powdered sugar and whisk until smooth. Drizzle it all over the cooled cake. Let it set for an hour. Then slice a big piece. The swirl inside is like a secret. I think it's the best part.

## Creative Twists

**Try orange zest in the glaze.** It adds a sunny, bright little kick. **Use walnuts instead of pecans.** They have a lovely, earthy flavor. **Add a handful of chocolate chips.** They make it feel like a festive treasure hunt. Which one would you try first? Comment below!

## Serving & Pairing Ideas

Serve a slice on your prettiest plate. A dollop of whipped cream on the side is perfect. For a beverage, a hot mug of spiced apple cider is so cozy. For the grown-ups, a small glass of sweet sherry pairs nicely. The cake is wonderful all on its own, too. It's perfect for a quiet afternoon with a book. Which would you choose tonight?

See also Chive and Potato Christmas Biscuits



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## Keeping Your Holiday Cake Happy

This cake stays moist for days. Just wrap it tightly at room temperature. For longer storage, freeze it whole or in slices. Wrap pieces well in plastic wrap first. Then place them in a freezer bag.

Thaw slices overnight on your counter. I once froze a whole cake for my grandson's surprise visit. It tasted just-baked when he arrived. Batch cooking the filling saves time during busy weeks. Make a double batch and freeze half.

This matters because good food is for sharing. Having a treat ready means you are always prepared for guests. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

## Bundt Pan Pitfalls and Simple Fixes

First, a sticky cake can be sad. Grease and flour your pan very well. Get into every little nook. I remember when my first cake lost its beautiful design. It taught me to be generous with the flour.

Second, a dry cake often means over-baking. Start checking with a skewer at 65 minutes. Ovens can run hot. Third, a sunken filling means you did not swirl it enough. Use your knife to really mix it into the batter.

Fixing these builds your cooking confidence. A perfect release and moist bite make everyone smile. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

## Your Quick Questions, Answered

**Q: Can I make this gluten-free?** A: Yes. Use a good gluten-free flour blend. Add 1 teaspoon xanthan gum if your blend lacks it.

**Q: Can I make it ahead?** A: Absolutely. Bake it up to two days before. Add the glaze on the day you serve it.

**Q: What if I don't have buttermilk?** A: Mix 3/4 cup milk with 2 teaspoons lemon juice. Let it sit for 5 minutes. It works perfectly.

**Q: Can I halve the recipe?** A: You can. Bake it in a loaf pan. Check for doneness after 50 minutes.

**Q: Any optional tips?** A: A little orange zest in the batter is lovely. *Fun fact: The lemon juice keeps the crumb extra tender.* **Which tip will you try first?**

## From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope this cake fills your home with wonderful smells. Baking is my favorite way to show love. I would love to hear about your baking adventures.

Please tell me all about it in the comments. **Have you tried this recipe?** Your stories are the best part of my day. Now, go preheat that oven.

See also Curried Sweet Potato Gold with Raisins

Happy cooking!  
—Elowen Thorn.



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## Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake | 13

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# Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake

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## Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake | 15

Cooking Method:[Baking](#)



## Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake | 16

Cuisine:[American](#)



Courses:[Dessert](#)



Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake | 18

Difficulty: **Beginner**

Prep time: **30 minutes**



## Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake | 20

Cook time:**1 hour 15 minutes**

Cooling time:**2 hours 20 minutes**



## Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake | 22

Total time:**4 hours 5 minutes**



## Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake | 23

Servings: **12 servings**



## Spiced Cranberry Pecan Holiday Cake | 24

Calories: **580 kcal**

**Best Season: Summer**

## **Description**

A festive and moist Bundt cake swirled with a tangy cranberry-orange

filling and packed with toasted pecans and warm pumpkin pie spice.

## Ingredients

### Filling:

- 8 ounces (227 grams/2 cups) fresh or frozen cranberries
- ½ cup (3½ ounces/99 grams) granulated sugar
- ½ cup orange juice

### Cake:

- 3 cups (15 ounces/425 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ cup buttermilk, room temperature
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 18 tablespoons (2¼ sticks) unsalted butter, cut into 18 pieces and softened
- 2 cups (14 ounces/397 grams) sugar
- 3 large eggs, plus 1 large yolk, room temperature
- 1½ cups pecans, toasted, cooled, and ground fine
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice

### Glaze:

- 2 tablespoons cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons whole milk
- 1 cup (4 ounces/113 grams) confectioners' sugar

## Instructions

1. **For the filling:** Bring cranberries, granulated sugar, and orange juice to boil in medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until cranberries have broken down and juices have thickened slightly, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer mixture to food processor and process until smooth, 10 to 15 seconds. Let cool completely.
2. **For the cake:** Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Grease and flour 12-cup nonstick Bundt pan. Combine flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda in medium bowl. In small bowl, whisk buttermilk, vanilla, and lemon juice together.
3. Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat butter and sugar on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add eggs and yolk, one at a time, and beat until combined. Reduce speed to low and add flour mixture in 3 additions, alternating with 2 additions of buttermilk mixture, scraping down bowl as needed.
4. Combine pecans and pumpkin pie spice in small bowl, then stir into cake batter until incorporated. Spoon half of batter into prepared pan and smooth top. Using back of spoon, create  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-deep channel in center of batter. Spoon half of filling into channel. Using butter knife, thoroughly swirl filling into batter. Repeat with remaining batter and filling.
5. Bake until skewer inserted in center comes out clean, 70 to 75 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking. Let cake cool in pan on wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove cake from pan and let cool completely on rack, about 2 hours.
6. **For the glaze:** Whisk cream cheese and milk in medium bowl until combined and no lumps remain. Whisk in confectioners' sugar until smooth. Drizzle evenly over top of cooled cake and let sit until glaze is firm, about 1 hour. Serve.

## Notes

Ensure all ingredients are at room temperature for best results. The cranberry filling must be completely cool before swirling into the batter. To toast pecans, spread on a baking sheet and bake at 350°F for 5-8 minutes, until fragrant.

Keywords:Cranberry, Pecan, Holiday Cake, Bundt Cake, Spice Cake