Start your new year deliciously with ten favorite recipes plus an easy, one-rise challah from the Hesed Cooking Team at Adas Israel Congregation. These recipes include classic Jewish favorites like honey cake and mushroom barley soup along with year-round, go-to dishes.

Over the past six years, more than 300 volunteers have lived acts of hesed (loving kindness) by coming together to cook and fill the synagogue’s freezers with savory and sweet dishes. The frozen food is always available to anyone to take for people who are sick, recovering from illness or surgery, welcoming a new baby, in mourning or for any other situation where good, nutritious food will help. In addition, adapting to the pandemic provided an opportunity to expand our in-person program to volunteers cooking at home and delivering the frozen food to the synagogue for distribution to several community organizations feeding the formerly homeless, new immigrants and other people in need.

Some recipes, like the baked ziti, have been modified slightly here from the narrower Hesed guidelines to provide more variety and ease for cooking at home. We hope you enjoy making and eating these dishes as much as all of us Hesed cooks have!  ~ Susan Barocas, Chair, Hesed Team

**Easy Challah**

This looks like a long recipe, but it’s not. Instead, there are lots of options for this one-rise challah. You can use either bread flour or all-purpose flour, each resulting in a little different texture. Bread flour is higher in protein which produces more gluten, which gives the bread dough its stretch and elasticity plus more of the characteristic bread “chew.” Just knead the dough a couple extra minutes with all-purpose flour. Hesed has made hundreds of these loaves with both kinds of flour. Use the suggested mix-ins and toppings or get creative. Pareve. Makes 2 large or 3 smaller loaves. Can easily be doubled.

4 large eggs  
2 1/4 teaspoons instant, rapid/quick-rise or active dry yeast  
1/4 cup granulated sugar  
1 cup warm water (about 100 degrees F)  
1/2 cup neutral vegetable oil (safflower, sunflower, grapeseed, avocado) plus 1 teaspoon  
1/2 cup honey  
1 teaspoon salt  
5-6 cups bread or all-purpose flour plus more for kneading  
Optional mix-ins: nuts, raisins, chopped dried fruit, chopped fresh herbs, shredded cheese, chocolate chips, chopped apples, roasted garlic, chocolate spread, everything seasoning, cinnamon-sugar  
Optional toppings: sesame seeds, poppy seeds, everything seasoning, cinnamon-sugar, za’atar, chopped garlic, whole or chopped herbs

Cover a large baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

Separate 1 egg, setting aside the yolk in a small bowl. Beat together the remaining egg white and 3 eggs.

*For instant or rapid/quick-yeast:*  
In a large mixing bowl, use a whisk or fork to mix together the yeast, sugar, water, 1/2 cup oil, honey, salt and beaten eggs. (Tip: add the honey to the measuring cup with or after the oil so it pours out easily.)

*For active dry yeast:*  
In a large mixing bowl, stir the yeast and sugar together. Add the warm water and let the mixture stand until it starts to foam, about 10 minutes. With a whisk or fork, beat in the oil, honey, salt and beaten eggs just until well blended.

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For all types of yeast:
Add 1 cup flour to the wet mixture and blend well with a whisk or fork. Switching to a wooden spoon, mix in the flour, 1 cupful at a time. After the second cup you should be able to mix vigorously to get rid of lumps, but don’t worry if there are a few left as they will get worked out. At this point, once the mixture is smooth, add any mix-ins you want to be incorporated throughout the loaf, then continue adding flour until the dough is sticky but holds together.

Turn the sticky dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Sprinkle it with more flour and begin kneading. Sprinkle flour on the dough and surface only as needed while you knead the dough for 12-15 minutes. The dough should be smooth, elastic and not sticky. Achieving a lovely smooth and soft feel to the dough will result in a lighter, better texture to the bread.

Coat the bottom and sides of a clean bowl with spray oil or a little vegetable oil. Form the dough into a compact rounded mound and place it in the oiled bowl. Turn it over in the bowl to oil all of its surface. Cover the bowl with a clean cotton kitchen towel or a large plate. Let rise in a warm area until the dough is puffy and nearly doubled in size, about 1 hour.

To bake the next day, put the dough in the oiled bowl and cover as directed, then put in the refrigerator to rise overnight. Take out 1 to 2 hours to bring the dough to room temperature before braiding and baking.

While the dough rises, beat the egg yolk together with the remaining 1 teaspoon of oil and set aside.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

When the dough is risen, turn it out onto a clean, dry work surface. You shouldn’t need to flour the surface. For braided challah, cut the dough into equal-sized pieces to make ropes. For three-braid loaves, cut into 3 pieces to make a large challah, 6 pieces for 2 medium challahs or 9 equal pieces to make 3 small loaves. Working on a floured surface, roll and stretch the dough pieces into even ropes about 1 1/2 inches wide (about the thickness of your thumb) and about 12 inches long for large and medium loaves, about 6 inches for small. Ropes work best if a little fatter in the middle and thinner at the ends. If the dough is resisting shaping too much, let it rest a few minutes.

Securely pinch ropes together at the top and spread them out. Braid the ropes close together but not too tight to make a braid that won’t come apart while cooking. Continue braiding until the end of the ropes. Pinch the ends together, then tuck both ends underneath the loaf. At this point, you can gently push the ends towards the middle for a more compact loaf. Another option is to start braiding each half from the middle out to the end, and then tuck the ends under the loaf.

For a round challah, either wrap the braided loaf into a circle and pinch the two ends together, then tuck them under the loaf. Repeat with the remaining rope doughs. Another option for round challah is to create two thicker, longer ropes of dough, then wrap each into a coil very slightly overlapping the edges as you go and ending in the middle where the dough will sit a bit higher.

Lightly brush the egg-oil mixture all over each loaf. Add optional topping(s) if desired. Place the braided loaves with space around each for expansion on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Bake challahs for 30 to 35 minutes until the top browns to a rich golden color and each loaf sounds hollow when tapped underneath. A thermometer inserted into the middle should reach 190 degrees F.

Cool completely on a wire rack. Serve or freeze for up to 3 months wrapped in aluminum foil and a plastic bag or wrap. Defrost while still wrapped. To serve warm, remove only the plastic and reheat in a 350-degree oven. If bread is defrosted, reheat for about 10 minutes. If frozen, reheat for 20 to 25 minutes in foil. For a crisp crust, remove the foil for the last few minutes.
Egg Muffins / Crustless Quiche

These healthy, handy “muffins” are similar to a crustless quiche and can, in fact, be made in a muffin tin or baking dish. Use whatever combination of vegetables and herbs you like or have handy. The dish freezes well and can be re-heated from frozen for a quick, healthy meal or snack. *Dairy or pareve. Serves 4-8.*

1 cup shredded cheddar, Parmesan, mozzarella or other shredded cheese of choice, including non-dairy
1 cup total small-diced broccoli, zucchini and/or mushrooms
1 cup small-diced bell pepper, any color(s), or 1 cup additional small-diced vegetables
1/2 cup small-diced green onions, white and green parts
3 tablespoons chopped herbs such as dill, basil, parsley, cilantro
6 large eggs
1/2 cup milk or milk substitute
1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/8 teaspoon black pepper or to taste

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease 12 muffin cups or 8x8-inch baking dish with spray oil. Sprinkle an overfull tablespoon of shredded cheese evenly in the bottom of each muffin cup or over the bottom of the square baking pan. On top of the cheese, add an overfull tablespoon each of the vegetables and peppers. Then sprinkle even amounts of green onion and herbs into each muffin cup or in the baking pan.

In a medium bowl, beat eggs until just getting foamy. Add milk, salt and pepper, and beat until well blended. Spoon or pour carefully and evenly over the cheese and vegetables into the 12 muffin cups, about 1/3 cup in each, or pour the entire amount over the cheese and vegetables in the greased pan. Bake until just set, 20 to 22 minutes for muffins and 25 to 30 minutes for the pan. Be careful not to overbake.

Cool 10 to 15 minutes before removing from muffin cups. Eggs in the pan can be cut into squares for serving or freezing. Both can be made ahead and refrigerated for 5 days or frozen. Reheat in 350-degree oven, defrosted muffins about 6 minutes, frozen 10 to 12 minutes; defrosted pan 10 to 12 minutes, frozen about 20 minutes.

Three Sisters and Friends Stew

Many Native American tribes have long planted corn, beans and squash together, appropriately named “Three Sisters" that form a symbiotic farming technique that makes the most of the beneficial relationship between these diet staples. The squash and corn are planted first, with squash providing ground cover to retain water and crowd out weeds. By the time the beans are planted about three weeks later, the corn has grown enough to provide the support pole for the beans to thrive. Just as they grow well together, the Three Sisters taste great cooked together in a variety of dishes. Adding “friends” - sweet potatoes, tomatoes, onion, garlic and spices - makes this stew richer in taste and nutrition. The stew is even better prepared a day ahead, making this an easy make-ahead dish for dinner or a party with family and friends. *Pareve. Serves 4-6.*

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium onion, diced
3-4 cloves garlic, minced or crushed
2 teaspoons ground cumin
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper or to taste (optional)
1 28-ounce can tomatoes, whole or diced
About 3 pounds butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1” pieces (about 3 cups)
1 large or 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled if desired, and cut into 1” pieces (about 2 cups)
2 15.5-ounce cans black beans, drained
2 cups frozen corn kernels

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1 1/2-2 cups vegetable broth or water
1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/4 teaspoon black pepper or to taste
Fresh parsley or cilantro, chopped, for garnish (optional)

Heat oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium to medium-low heat. Add onion, stir in a pinch of salt and sauté until softened, about 10 minutes, not letting the onions brown. Add garlic and sauté a minute or two more, stirring a few times so the garlic does not brown. Add cumin, chili powder, oregano, turmeric and cayenne pepper, if using, and stir well to combine. Cook a minute or two, stirring, until the spices are blended and fragrant.

Add tomatoes with their juice and the broth or water. If using whole tomatoes, break up with a spoon or your hands as you add them. Turn heat to medium high. Stir to thoroughly blend the mixture, then add the squash and sweet potatoes and mix well. When the mixture starts to bubble, turn the heat down to medium low, cover the pot and cook at a gentle boil until almost fork tender, about 20 minutes. Mix in beans, corn and broth or water. Cover and cook about 20 minutes more. Because of the salt in the canned tomatoes and beans, taste and add salt and pepper as desired.

Serve with rice (wild rice was a staple for some native tribes), quinoa, couscous or other grain, garnished with chopped parsley or cilantro. Refrigerate for up to 5 days or frozen, defrosted and reheated for serving.

**Mushroom Barley Soup**

This is one of those classic comfort foods found in nearly every Jewish deli, but it’s easy to make for yourself. Traditionally made with broth from beef bones, the soup is also good with vegetable, chicken or mushroom broth. This recipe is timed for pearled barley which is the most common sold in grocery stores. Although technically not a whole grain as the hull has been removed, it’s healthier than most other refined grains because some of barley’s fiber remains in the kernel. There are also quick cooking and hulled barley, which takes about 30 to 40 minutes more to cook, so be sure to read package directions. Although the recipe says to dice the vegetables, chop or dice to the size you like. If you make them a bit chunkier and use only 7 cups broth, it becomes more of a thick stew. *Pareve or meat. Serves a crowd.*

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large yellow or white onion, diced (about 1 cup)
2 medium carrots, diced, peeled or scrubbed (about 1 cup)
2 celery stalks with leaves, stalks (about 1 cup) and leaves diced separately
A few pinches plus 1 teaspoon salt
2-3 medium cloves garlic, minced, grated or crushed through a press
1-1 1/4 pounds white button or cremini mushrooms, sliced on the thin side
1 cup uncooked barley
1 teaspoon dried thyme
2 teaspoons dried dill
8-9 cups vegetable, chicken, beef or mushroom broth, homemade or store bought
1/4-1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Heat the olive oil in a large soup pot over medium heat. Add the onion, carrots, celery and a couple pinches of salt. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until starting to soften. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Stir in mushrooms and cook for 10 to 12 minutes, stirring occasionally as the vegetables soften.

Add barley, thyme, dill and 8 cups broth. Stir well and bring to a boil. Cover, turn the heat to medium low or low and let the soup simmer gently, stirring occasionally, for about 50 minutes until the vegetables and barley are soft and the flavors have blended. Season with salt and pepper to taste. If needed, add the extra cup of broth as the soup cooks and thickens to get your desired consistency. Serve hot. Cool completely before storing in the refrigerator for up to 5 days or freezer for up to 3 months.

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**Baked Ziti with Spinach**

A favorite during the pandemic Hesed Cooks @home, people often made one for themselves while making one for Hesed. You can use white, whole wheat or gluten-free ziti. Full-fat ricotta will have creamier results, however low-fat also works. *Dairy. Serves 6-8 generously.*

2-3 teaspoons salt  
16 ounces uncooked ziti (about 8 cups cooked)  
3 cups plus 1/2 cup of your favorite tomato sauce, jarred or homemade  
20 ounces fresh baby spinach (about 16 cups raw that becomes 2 cups cooked)  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
2 cups ricotta cheese  
2-3 cloves garlic, grated on a zester or crushed in a press  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon zest (from 1 lemon)  
1 teaspoon dried basil or oregano  
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Stir in salt and then the pasta. Cook according to package directions just to *al dente*, which means it’s cooked through but firm to the bite. Be careful not to overcook it. Drain the pasta and add to a large mixing bowl along with 3 cups tomato sauce. Gently mix to coat the pasta.

Roughly chop the spinach. Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add all the spinach and sauté, stirring occasionally, about 2 minutes until just wilted, then remove from heat.

Combine the cooked spinach with the sauce-coated pasta and toss to mix together.

In a medium bowl, combine ricotta, garlic, lemon zest, basil or oregano and 1 cup mozzarella. Mix well and set aside.

Spread the remaining 1/2 cup tomato sauce in the prepared baking dish. Add half the pasta-spinach mixture. Dollop all the ricotta mixture on top of the pasta layer, gently spreading it a bit with the back of a spoon. Add a layer of the remaining pasta-spinach mixture. Sprinkle the remaining 1 cup mozzarella evenly over the top.

Bake uncovered 35-40 minutes or until mixture is bubbly and cheese is melted and just starting to turn golden brown. Cooked and cooled ziti can be wrapped well in foil and plastic, then frozen for up to 3 months. Defrost and reheat in 350-degree oven for 20 minutes covered and 5 minutes uncovered.

**Shirley’s Easiest Noodle Kugel**

This is my mother Shirley’s (z”l) amazingly easy, always delicious recipe that I have been making and eating since childhood. Try adding shredded apple, golden raisins or chopped dried fruit as you like. Low-fat or non-fat dairy ingredients work well as do whole wheat noodles. Other variations can include reducing the sugar even more or substituting additional sour cream or yogurt for the cottage cheese. The only thing you cannot do is cut down on the amount of milk or pineapple with juice, which hydrate the noodles. *Dairy. Serves 8-10.*

1 stick (1/4 pound) butter  
4 large eggs  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
2 cups milk or milk substitute  
1/4 cup sour cream or plain yogurt  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon plus more for optional topping
8 ounces cottage cheese, small curd, or additional 1 cup sour cream or plain yogurt
1 small can (8 ounce) crushed pineapple, including juice
1 12-ounce package medium-wide egg noodles

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Put the stick of butter in a glass 9x13" pan and place it in the oven while it's preheating until all the butter melts. When melted, turn the dish to make sure the butter has spread over the entire bottom and part way up the sides of the pan. Leave the extra butter in the pan.

In a bowl, beat or whisk together eggs, sugar, salt, milk, sour cream or yogurt, vanilla and cinnamon until well blended. Add cottage cheese and crushed pineapple with juice, stirring well to blend.

Spread uncooked noodles in the buttered pan. Pour the liquid mixture evenly over the noodles and pat down the top gently to make as even as possible. Sprinkle the top with extra cinnamon if desired.

Cover the pan loosely with aluminum foil and bake 40 minutes. Remove foil and bake 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown and crispy on top. The kugel freezes very well wrapped tightly in aluminum foil and then placed in a plastic bag. To serve, defrost and warm at 350 degrees, still wrapped in foil, for about 15 minutes, then open and heat 5-10 minutes more to crisp the top.

**Cheesy Spinach Noodle Kugel**

A savory kugel is less expected, but this quick one is almost a complete meal-in-one. It's good with full-, low- or non-fat dairy products and whole wheat egg noodles instead of regular egg noodles. Be sure to use grated parmesan in the casserole and shredded mozzarella for the top. Dairy. Serves 8-10.

1 12-ounce bag medium-wide egg noodles
4 large eggs
1 cup sour cream
2 cups milk
1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
2 teaspoons onion powder
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1 16-ounce bag frozen chopped spinach, defrosted but not drained
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease well a 9x13-inch inch baking dish. Spread the uncooked noodles out evenly in the greased dish.

In a large bowl, use a whisk to beat the eggs well. Add the sour cream, milk, parmesan, onion powder, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Mix well. Add the spinach including all the liquid in the bag and mix until everything is well incorporated.

Pour the spinach mixture evenly over the noodles in the greased baking dish and gently stir to make sure it's incorporated evenly with the noodles. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake for 45 minutes. Take off the foil, sprinkle mozzarella evenly over the top and continue baking uncovered for 10 to 15 minutes until the cheese is melted and just starting to turn golden. Serve immediately or cool and refrigerate for up to 5 days. The casserole freezes well, either whole in the pan or cut into smaller portions. Reheat defrosted kugel in 350-degree oven.
**Corn Pudding**

A easy, satisfying main or side. Use canned corn as frozen doesn't work for this recipe, which I got over a decade ago. I have adapted it since, but I can't remember the original source. *Dairy. Serves 6-8 as a main, 8-10 as a side.*

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter, softened to room temperature  
2 tablespoons granulated sugar  
5 large eggs  
1/2 cup all-purpose flour or gluten-free one-for-one flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
2 15.25-ounce cans whole kernel corn, drained  
2 14.75-ounce cans creamed corn  
1 4-ounce can diced roasted green chiles

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9x12- or 9x13-inch baking dish.

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar with an electric beater or wooden spoon until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the flour, baking powder, salt and pepper and beat again just until the ingredients are completely combined. With a large spoon, stir in all the corn and the green chiles. Pour into the prepared baking dish and pat the top to make sure it’s evenly distributed. Bake for about 1 hour or until top is a crusty golden brown. Serve warm. The dish freezes well. Cool completely before wrapping and freezing for up to two months. To serve, defrost and warm at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes, loosely covered with foil to prevent further browning.

**Sour Cream Chocolate Bread**

You might be tempted to use a mixer for this chocolatey “bread,” but don’t. The thick batter comes together easily with just a wooden spoon. Serve dusted with confectioners’ sugar and fresh berries.

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened to room temperature  
1 cup granulated sugar  
2 large eggs, lightly beaten  
1 cup sour cream  
1/4 cup milk or unsweetened milk substitute  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 cup chocolate chips (bittersweet, milk or white chocolate)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease with cooking spray 1 standard 8.5x4.5 loaf pan.

In a large mixing bowl, use a wooden spoon to cream softened butter and sugar together. Add eggs, sour cream, milk and vanilla extract, and beat with the spoon or a whisk until smooth and creamy. In a separate bowl, whisk together dry ingredients. Add dry ingredients to wet in two batches, stirring each time with a wooden spoon just until completely combined. Don’t overmix. Stir in the chips. The batter will be very thick.

Spoon batter into greased loaf pan(s) to 3/4 full. Keep edges and sides of the pan clean, wiping them with a damp paper towel if needed. Bake larger loaves for 45-50 minutes, about 30-35 for smaller pans depending on the size. Bread is done when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let bread rest in pan for 20 minutes before removing it to a wire rack to cool completely. Freezes well for up to 3 months wrapped in aluminum foil and a plastic bag or wrap. Defrost wrapped when ready to eat.

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Honey Cake

Traditionally served during the High Holidays along with wishes for a sweet new year, honey cake really is good any time of year. The spices make this cake especially flavorful along with using good honey. Serve as is or dusted with confectioners’ sugar or drizzled with a chocolate glaze.

3 cups all-purpose flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 cup honey
1/2 cup vegetable oil
4 large eggs
1 cup orange juice
1/2-1 cup golden raisins, chocolate chips or chopped nuts (optional)
1 tablespoon sliced almonds (optional)

Chocolate glaze
1 cup confectioners’ sugar
3 tablespoons cocoa powder
2 tablespoons butter, melted
2-3 tablespoons warm water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease one 10-inch bundt pan or two 8.5x4.5-inch loaf pans.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, cloves and ginger until well blended. Set aside.

In a separate large mixing bowl, whisk together or vigorously mix with a wooden spoon the sugar, honey, oil and eggs until well blended and a little lighter color.

Combine the flour mixture into the egg mixture, about 1/3 at a time, alternately with the about 1/3 of the orange juice, mixing well with the additions to prevent lumps. Use a whisk very briefly at the end to get rid of any lumps. Quickly stir in raisins, chips or nuts if desired. Pour batter into prepared pan(s). Sprinkle with sliced almonds if using.

Bake for 40 to 50 minutes for larger sized loaf pans or 22 to 25 minutes for minis. When done, a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Allow to cool before removing from pan. Freezes well for up to 3 months wrapped in aluminum foil and a plastic bag or wrap. Defrost when ready to eat. Can warm briefly in a 350-degree oven wrapped in the aluminum only.

To make the glaze, whisk together the sugar and cocoa powder until well blended. Add melted butter and 2 tablespoons warm water, mixing well until shiny and smooth. The glaze is best when a little thick so it drips slowly down the cake. Add more water for a thinner glaze or if the mixture thickens too much as it sits.
Applesauce Spice Cake

Another of my childhood favorites – which for some inexplicable reason I used to call “bubble gum cake” – is now being introduced to many new people as a Hesed favorite.

2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon allspice  
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon cardamom  
1/3 cup good neutral vegetable oil (i.e. safflower, sunflower, grapeseed, avocado)  
2 large eggs  
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar  
1 cup unsweetened applesauce  
1/2 cup golden raisins and/or chopped walnuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease an 8”x8” square pan or an 8.5x4.5-inch loaf pan.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients, flour through cardamom. In a separate large mixing bowl, add the oil, eggs and brown sugar. Beat at medium speed for 2 minutes. Add applesauce and mix at low speed for 1 minute. Add dry ingredients and mix at low speed just until well blended, stopping to scrape the bottom and sides once or twice to make sure all the dry mixture are incorporated. By hand, use a wooden spoon to mix dry ingredients into wet just until well blended. Quickly stir in the raisins and/or nuts if using.

Bake loaf pan for about 50-60 minutes, about 30-35 minutes in a square pan. When done, the cake springs back to the touch and a toothpick comes out clean. Be careful not to overcook as the cake burns easily and will dry out. Cool for 20 minutes in the pan before removing from the pan to finish cooling on a rack until the bottom is not at all warm to the touch. Eat as is or sprinkled with powdered sugar.

Notes