* ***A Gingerbread Romance***
  + Synopsis: With Christmas just weeks away, the architecture firm Taylor works for enters her in a contest in which the teams will design and build life sized gingerbread houses. After the contest, Taylor will likely be getting a promotion to a position in another city. The firm teams her up with Annabelle, a renowned French pastry chef with whom Taylor instantly locks horns. When Annabelle backs out, Taylor stumbles into a local bakery and meets Adam, a baker and single dad. In an act of desperation, Taylor convinces Adam to partner with her for the contest, arguing that winning would give the bakery and his designs much needed exposure. For years Taylor has been resistant to call anywhere “home” for fear it will only be temporary. But the time she spends with Adam and his daughter Brook in their cozy home, decorating for Christmas, and exploring Philadelphia at Christmas, fills her with a longing for a place to call home

Gingerbread Cake with Lemon Sauce

There’s nothing like the smell of gingerbread to make you think Christmas—but why build a house when you can eat Gingerbread Cake! In A Gingerbread Romance Taylor finds herself baking and rebaking the layers needed for a life sized gingerbread house, but you can pop this easy-to-make cake in the oven and sit back and enjoy your book while it bakes.

Yield: 12 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

Gingerbread Cake

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened

½ cup brown sugar, packed

1 large egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

2 teaspoons ground ginger

1 teaspoon baking soda

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

¾ cup unsulfured mild molasses

¾ cup hot water

Lemon Sauce

½ cup granulated sugar

¼ cup unsalted butter

3 tablespoons fresh squeezed lemon juice

1 teaspoon fresh lemon zest (optional)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

As needed whipped cream

DIRECTIONS

1. To prepare gingerbread cake: preheat oven to 325°F. Butter a 9-inch springform pan; set aside.
2. Combine butter and brown sugar in bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; beat at medium speed until light and fluffy.
3. Add egg and vanilla extract and mix until well combined.
4. In a separate bowl, combine flour, cinnamon, ginger, baking soda, nutmeg and salt; stir to blend. In a separate bowl; combine molasses and water; stir to blend.
5. Alternately add about 1/3 dry and wet ingredients to mixing bowl and mix until just combined. Scrape down sides of bowl; pour batter into pan.
6. Bake for 40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out clean. Cool cake in pan on rack. Serve slightly warm or at room temperature.
7. To prepare lemon sauce: combine all ingredients in saucepan; bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer over low heat for 3 minutes, stirring frequently, until sauce thickens.
8. Slice cake into wedges; top each with warm lemon sauce and whipped cream.