

With the warm spring sun these past few days I am hoping that the interminable rains of this last January & February will be gone from my memory. Those soggy months had us out in the weather far more than usual, trying to keep our magic, flying cows at home!

Long before we became the owners/custodians of our beautiful farm, there roamed a herd of about forty Belted Galloway cattle, across about 100 acres of what a half would become our farm. Around the whole of the property ran a three-strand barbed wire fence with split cedar posts. Over the years we've been here, almost this entire fence has been replaced with 5-strand & treated posts. Just over 2.5 km. That's a lot of fence. We are somewhat experts. One small stretch of the original fence still stands, is still in great condition, and for some inexplicable reason the cows believe that it is as strong as a 5-strand.

One area that was a difficult place to build a fence is where the fence runs up the rocky soil to the cliff face. It is so steep, that when I stand on a deer trail my hands steady myself by putting them on the ground in front of my face. Somehow the deer zigzag up these trails with no problem. The cows are heavier and taller, so their trails stop a bit further down where the slope is not so steep. Their trails are about 6" wider than a deer trail. We have always managed this area by pulling deadfall to brace behind standing trees, and stacking up lots of dead branches, knowing that the animals could not climb up and over the piles, when climbing up a slope. We tend to it every few years, adding more to our stacked deadwood walls.

On many of those rainy days early in the year, our late afternoons were spent finding the herd of flying, magic cows, trying to figure out where they could possibly have got through the fence. Our fences are in such great state of repair after many days of fixing what could even possibly be a breach point. But still they were getting out.

One late afternoon, I did the usual search. While walking the fence line in the valley, I saw a tiny white face at the far end of the valley, at the far reach of our neighbors' land. As I watched, the whole herd emerged from the trees, and slowly made their way towards our property. With opening a nearby gate wide, and a bucket of grain, we were able to get them back home. We locked them up in an 8-acre area, until we could at last find just where they'd been getting out.

We waited until the waters had receded somewhat from the valley bottom, and got across into the cliff bottom. Climbing up, we found that the property line that is way up the slope had been re-surveyed. Our only guess is that the surveyors had broken through our carefully piled stacks to work the line, creating an access point for the cows. We ran ropes all the way down the hillside, tied from tree to tree; at about waist height over bases of dead fir & cedar, and wove branches and reworked stacks all the way to the top.

That day was for me, the first day of spring. The sun was shining the whole day while we worked in our shirtsleeves. I was hesitant to let the cows out of their incarceration, but knew that we needed to. Spring has continued on, with the cows quietly grazing on all parts of our property, with no venturing to far off places.

So in celebration of this newfound time (meaning not having to search fences day after day), I made a delightful carrot loaf with walnuts and candied ginger. I hope you enjoy

it. It is perfect made using either all-purpose wheat, or gluten free flour. It is also dairy free, an added bonus if feeding those with dairy issues.

Carrot Loaf with Ginger & Walnuts

Makes one 4" x 12" loaf or one 9" x 5" loaf

Ingredients

1¼ c + 1 T flour or GF All-Purpose Flour (measure GF flour by weight advised on your GF flour mix)
1½ t baking powder
1½ t cinnamon
1 t salt
¼ c diced candied ginger
½ c walnuts, coarsely chopped
3 large eggs
1 c sugar
2 t vanilla extract
¾ c canola oil
8 oz/227 gr carrots, trimmed, peeled and grated
1 T golden sugar

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°

Lightly grease the loaf pan, and dust the bottom with flour, using GF flour if being used in the recipe.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the 1¼ c flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt.

In another bowl, mix together the ginger pieces, walnuts, and the remaining tablespoon of whichever flour you are using.

In the bowl of a mixer, beat the eggs at medium high to incorporate air. Add in the sugar and continue beating until light & fluffy, about 3-4 minutes.

Gently add in the oil & vanilla with the beaters still running on medium.

Remove from mixer.

Fold in the dry ingredients, followed by the carrots, and lastly the ginger & walnuts.

Pour into the prepared loaf pan, smoothing the top.

Sprinkle the golden sugar over the top.

Bake in the center of the preheated oven for about 65 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the loaf comes out clean.

Let cool in pan for 30 minutes, and then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Keep in a sealed container for up to 5 days.

These loaves freeze beautifully. Take out of freezer the night before you need them, and let them come to room temperature.

Option: replace the ginger with 1 large apple, cored, peeled, and diced.