**Parsnip Muffins with Ginger & Orange Cream Cheese Frosting (+ Parsnip Top & Hazelnut Pesto)**

If like me you always find your fridge to be in abundance of root vegetables, this is the perfect way to enjoy them and make sure nothing goes to waste. You may think carrots are the go-to root vegetable in sweet bakes but adding parsnips to muffins provides a wonderful and sharper sweetness. However, you could still substitute the parsnip in this recipe for carrots or even use a 50/50 mix of both, which is also very lovely.

The trick here is not to overbeat your batter. By overmixing, you will be adding a lot of air into the muffin which means they will rise quite high in the oven and then collapse once they rest. So, this recipe is perfect for when you’re feeling a bit tired and just want to do nothing more than some light stirring in the kitchen!

A quick tip – don’t throw away the carrot or parsnip tops! Blitz them in a food processor with a small handful of hazelnuts, a clove of garlic, a handful of basil, a grating of Parmesan, some salt, pepper and enough extra-virgin olive oil to create a thick, velvety pesto that is just delicious with pasta or slathered in sandwiches.

**For the muffins**

* 85g soft brown sugar
* 85g caster sugar
* 200g plain flour
* ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
* 1 teaspoon baking powder
* 1 teaspoon cinnamon
* A grating of fresh nutmeg
* 200g parsnips – peeled and grated to fine shreds
* 2 eggs
* 150ml vegetable oil
* 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

**For the frosting**

* 100g unsalted butter
* 250g soft cheese
* 50ml double cream
* 100g icing sugar
* A thumb-sized piece of ginger – peeled
* 1 orange
1. Preheat the oven to 160°C and line a 12-hole muffin tray with paper cases.
2. In a large bowl, combine the sugars, flour, bicarb, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and fork together to mix.
3. Add the parsnips shreds to the bowl of flour and sugar and stir through.
4. In a jug, combine the eggs, oil and vanilla and then pour into the dry. Stir the wet into the dry gently but not for too long, just until they are combined, but don’t overmix.
5. Divide the batter evenly between the cases and put in the oven for 25 minutes until a small skewer (or strand of spaghetti!) can be pushed into the muffin and it comes out clean. Allow them to rest, still in the tin, on a cooling rack while you make your frosting.
6. For the frosting, beat the butter in a large bowl until soft and then stir in the soft cheese, double cream and icing sugar until thoroughly combined and the frosting is thick. It’s easier to do this with a handheld mixer, but a whisk would be fine – just keep going until it’s thick.
7. Grate the ginger and orange zest into the bowl and using a spoon, fold them into the frosting.
8. Once the muffins are cooled, remove them from the tin and using a spoon, swirl the frosting on top of the cakes and grate over a little more orange zest.