Luscious, Moist Carrot Cake

3 cups all-purpose flour
3 cups granulated sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 Tablespoon baking soda
1 Tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 1/2 cups canola oil
4 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 Tablespoon vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups shelled walnuts, chopped
1 cup shredded coconut
1 1/2 cups pureed cooked carrots
1 small 8 oz. can of crushed pineapple, drained
Cream Cheese Frosting (recipe below)
1/2 cup walnuts for the top (optional)

Preheat oven to 350. Grease two 9 inch cake pans. Line the bottoms with parchment paper. Peel and cook carrots until a fork easily can be poked in to them. One small bag of full sized carrots should yield about the right amount of pureed, cooked carrots. Drain the carrots and purree while still warm in a blender or food processor until they are smooth. Measure out 1 1/2 cups of the carrot puree and set aside.

Sift dry ingredients into a bowl. Stir dry ingredients together with a whisk to combine well. Add oil, eggs and vanilla. Beat well for about 2 minutes. Fold in walnuts, coconut, carrots and pineapple. Pour equal amounts of batter into each pan. Set in the middle of the oven and bake for about 50 minutes or until edges have pulled away from sides and toothpick inserted in middle comes out clean.

Remove from oven and let sit in pans 10 minutes. Turn out onto a rack and cool completely. When cool, level cakes to take humps off the center with a serrated knife. Spread cream cheese frosting between the layers and on top.

I leave the sides out in the open because they are a beautiful brown and nice and crunchy. Sprinkle chopped nuts on the top if desired.

Cream Cheese Frosting
(makes enough for middle and top of cake. Double if you want to frost sides)

8 oz. cream cheese at room temperature
6 Tablespoons butter at room temperature
3 cups confectioners sugar, sifted

Cream together cheese and butter. Slowly stir in sifted confectioners sugar and continue beating until incorporated and light and fluffy.