

# Beyond the typical cake



PHOTOS SPECIAL TO WNC PARENT

If there are dietary concerns, try a gluten-free birthday cake from World's Best Carrot Cake.

Move over yellow cake with buttercream — there are other birthday options

By Lockie Hunter  
WNC Parent contributor

The bakeries of Western North Carolina offer myriad alternatives to the traditional birthday cake. From cupcakes and cookie platters to vegan, gluten-free and other special dietary preferences, there are many mouth-watering options.

## Cupcakes

"There is something about having a cupcake with a half-cake to half-icing ratio, all to yourself, to bring out your possessive side," said Heather McMullen, co-owner of The Sisters McMullen. Cupcakes stir up fond memories

from childhood. "It is cake that does not need a plate or a fork. What could be better? We also offer a smaller cupcake perfect for the younger crowd."

The Sisters McMullen, 55 Weaver-ville Highway #9, Asheville, 252-9330; 1 N. Pack Square, Asheville, 252-9454.

## Ice cream cake

In addition to scoops in many flavors, The Hop dishes up ice cream cakes. The Hop, has been around for 30 years. Owners Greg and Ashley Garrison are both UNC Asheville alumni. "The Hop makes homemade ice cream cakes with any flavors of ice cream and a cookie or cake crust,"



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Ashley Garrison says. "All cakes are custom decorated, too." The Hop also hosts free special events. The Hop, 640 Merrimon Ave., Suite 103, Asheville, 254-2224.

Cater to your special dietary needs

Crème Patisserie and Confectionery makes special cakes that include low fat, sugar free, vegan and gluten-free options. At 640 Merrimon Ave, suite 201, Asheville, 350-9839.

Carrot cake

Avi Sommerville, co-owner and founder of World's Best Carrot Cake, says, "We are famous for several varieties of carrot cake that help meet dietary preferences: 100 percent organic; gluten-free traditional or chocolate carrot cake; vegan carrot cake; and by special order, gluten-free/lactose-free carrot cakes."

World's Best Carrot Cake, 175 Weaverville Highway, Suite V, Asheville, 658-2738, worldsbestcarrotcake.com

Cookie trays

A birthday party with a seasonal theme could include gingerbread cookies shaped into turkeys, scarecrows or other fun designs for any season. The Bake Shoppe, 146 Weaverville Highway, Asheville, 645-2038.

Mini treats

"Trays of mini desserts are perfect for a party," says Sarah Resnick, pastry chef at City Bakery. "We offer mini cheesecakes, mini éclairs, mini fruit tarts, mini cream puffs, as well as truffles. This option allows you to have several desserts, instead of just one cake, so everyone is sure to find something they love. It's easy finger food, no need for slicing and serving." City Bakery, 60 Biltmore Ave., 252-4426; and 88 Charlotte St., 254-4289, both Asheville.

Moon pie

Owner Bridgette Cannon describes the moon pie as "a dessert that starts with a Sugar Momma's cookie base, then alternates up with our famous icing with our signature vanilla bean cake. Once you've got it stacked where you want it, we then pour a chocolate ganache over it — white, milk, or dark chocolate." Asheville Cake Co., 348-0720, ashevillecakecompany.com. Call for an appointment.

Custom chocolate sculpture

Let the folks at Chocolate Gems create one-of-a-kind chocolate sculptures for the birthday boy or girl. Or indulge each guest with their own chocolate box decorated with sugar flowers and leaves. At 106 W. State St., Black Mountain, 669-9105.



Cupcakes, like these from The Sisters McMullen, can make a great alternative to the typical birthday cake.

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