



Quitt-Free DESSERTS

Crumbs

Arwa
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IS THERE REALLY SUCH
A THING AS A HEALTHY
DESSERT THAT
ALSO
TASTES DELICIOUS?

I wanted to find out if you could have your cake and eat it too, literally.

I started out experimenting with healthy desserts for health reasons and my serious sweet tooth! A (twice) daily habit I must admit. So, coming up with more healthful and nutritious desserts was a necessity in order to feel good and not feel deprived or guilty. Turns out, that over the course of 8 years of lots of minor kitchen disasters I found a way to satisfy my sweet tooth and stay healthy.

Now that I found it is possible to enjoy delicious desserts and feel good about it, I wanted to share my findings with you so you can stop feeling guilty and start feeling satisfied.



Guilt-Free Desserts Myth or Reality?

This e-book is a guide on how to health-ify delicious desserts step by step. It does not matter if you are new to baking or a Martha Stewart type because there is something for everyone. It's great for those of you who have an intolerance to dairy, wheat, gluten or eggs as I explain how best to replace them in

your favorite desserts. There's also a section on natural sweeteners and how to incorporate them into your baking. Lastly, you will find 10 of the most popular recipes from ilove-crumbs.com (many that you can find on my blog) for you to experiment with.

A short disclaimer before we get into the guide. The result of my quest has led me to conclude that “**healthy desserts**” means different things to different people.

In my opinion, it depends on three factors:

- *What* you consider to be healthy
- *How* much dessert you have on a daily basis
- *What* your current diet and lifestyle is

In a nut shell, if you have a grande frappuccino with extra caramel and a chocolate donut for breakfast every day... then switching to homemade granola with an almond milk latte would be considered great progress. However, if you eat really clean and workout daily then go ahead and indulge in a decadent dessert at Crumbs WITHOUT sharing and enjoy every bite!

“I still love our desserts and treat myself with them guilt free from time to time ”

“I am the founder of Crumbs after all! ”



I'm not a doctor or nutritionist...I'm only sharing my opinion and experience with you here. You need to listen to your body and find what works for you. You may find that by eating higher nutrient desserts, you will be satisfied with eating less. Food is pleasure, and sweet food is one of life's joys. Part of being healthy is being happy...and if sweet treats make you happy... then go for it.

*If you have any
questions or would like to share
your creations with me!*

please contact me by email at
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Replacing Processed Flour



Refined white flour has very few natural vitamins and minerals because they have been stripped away. This can lead to the same health problems caused by over eating refined sugar. The good news is that there are better-for-you flour options we can swap in when recipes call for white flour. Our first and easiest step in creating more nutritious desserts without altering the 'chemistry' involved in baking is to replace white processed flour with a better-for-you whole grain option. I will dive deeper into gluten-free baking in a later chapter, which is slightly more complicated.

As with the rest of the sections of this book, the dessert you are making will dictate the best alternative ingredient to use in order to achieve the texture and flavor you desire.

A few general notes about baking with whole-grain flours:

Whole-grain flours tend to be denser ...

making them a great choice when seeking a wholesome flavor as in **Morning Glory Muffins**. But not the best option for cakes or desserts with a lighter crumb such as chiffon or vanilla sponge cake. As a general rule, the lighter and airier the cake, the better it is to stick with unbleached all-purpose flour.

Whole-grain flours tend to absorb more liquid ...

and may slightly increase baking time. One way to bring back moisture is to substitute some of the sugar in the recipe with a liquid sweetener. This is definitely an advantage for the natural baker that prefers sweeteners such as honey, maple syrup and date syrup. We will discuss natural sweeteners in the next chapter

As a start, replace part of the white flour ...

in a recipe with one of the options given and increase gradually each time you make it. You can also get away with replacing about a third of the flour with a gluten-free option without the recipe being affected too much.

In general, for every cup of whole grain flour ...

you substitute for all-purpose, take out one tablespoon and replace it with the same amount of arrowroot or cornstarch to help lighten things up.

So, with that in mind here are some of my favorite alternative flours you can start experimenting with.

Whole - Wheat

There are a variety of wheat flours available and they vary depending on when and where the crop was grown, the color of the wheat, and how it was harvested and processed. For simplicity's sake, whole-wheat pastry flour is a good replacement for all-purpose flour in most recipes. If you can't get a hold of whole-wheat pastry flour, then you can combine whole-wheat flour with all-purpose flour, or go all-in keeping in mind the resulting texture will be slightly denser. Try making this ***Vegan Marbled Banana Bread***.



Spelt

It is closely related to wheat, and although it contains gluten, many people sensitive to gluten can tolerate spelt more easily than wheat. Spelt is also relatively high in protein and tends to be easily digested. It is a great flour for baking, and since it absorbs liquid even more than whole-wheat flour does, it's perfect for recipes calling for natural liquid sweeteners such as honey or maple syrup. Try making these *Carrot & Quinoa Muffins* to enjoy for breakfast.



Rye

I love using it for savory breads more than desserts as it has quite a strong flavor and dark color. If used in desserts I would usually mix it with a more neutral tasting flour such wheat, spelt or oat. I would only use it for quick-breads such as banana bread or pumpkin muffins. Many people with a gluten intolerance seem to respond well to rye flour as it has a lower gluten content.



Oat Flour

A great starting flour to begin experimenting with. You can make oat flour at home by grinding your oats in a food processor or blender. Try making these chocolate pancakes to see how easy using oat flour can be with spectacular results. We will revisit oat flour again in the gluten-free chapter.



Replacing Dairy is easier than you think!



You recently learned your child is allergic to dairy and their birthday is around the corner... or that in order to get the clear and glowing skin of your dreams you must quit dairy for good...wait don't panic just yet! It's easier than you think...

With so many people either being lactose intolerant, allergic to dairy or simply preferring a plant-based diet, the availability and variety of dairy free products has grown. In this chapter I will share with you how best to use them to achieve the texture, flavor and satisfaction we associate with dairy in desserts.

When you are looking to convert a recipe to being dairy-free, it's important to consider the original product's properties - is the texture light, heavy, rich or smooth? Is the flavor sweet or slightly acidic? Is the color white or creamy? Once you know that, you can then decide which is the best dairy-free alternative to use.

Many of the dairy milk alternatives are easily available in most supermarkets, several of which you can make at home, such as almond and oat milk.

In general, I recommend the unsweetened and unflavored milks when buying ready-made milk so you can control the sweetness level and flavor. Also buy organic whenever possible to avoid any harmful additives and chemicals. In terms of equipment, for some milks such as cashew or macadamia, you will only need a high-speed blender. Other milks such as almond or oat will need a blender and a cheesecloth or milk bag to strain the milk. Soy milk however needs a soy milk maker, which can also be used for nut and seed milks.

Different dairy-free milks perform differently in baked goods in terms of both flavor and texture. For best results you will want to keep more than one type of dairy free milk in your kitchen. Below I've listed for you the most common dairy alternatives for milk available with some helpful tips on how best to use them in baking.



Soy Milk

Is high in protein; providing all essential amino-acids. It is closest in consistency to cow's milk with a neutral flavor. Best used in recipes calling for whole milk. It's stable at high temperatures, and best used for general baking, in addition to pudding or custard desserts. Buy non-GMO whenever possible.



Almond Milk

Is high in manganese and B vitamins for energy production, Vitamin E for tissue strength, fiber for lowering cholesterol and good digestion, and calcium for bone and heart health. Consistency tends to be light when store bought. Homemade milk can be made light to creamy by adjusting the ratio of nuts to water. It has a neutral, slightly nutty flavor. Best used in recipes calling for whole milk. Avoid boiling (like when making custard or pudding) as it may separate. Best if homemade to control consistency, it will also be more nutrient dense and leftover pulp can be made into almond flour. However homemade won't last for more than 3 days in the fridge.



Cashew Milk

Is high in magnesium for muscle relaxation and hormone production and good fats for heart health. Consistency is creamy with a slightly sweet flavor. Homemade can be especially creamy when reducing the water to nuts ratio. One of the easiest milks to make at home. Substitute for cow's milk in desserts, and cream in ice cream and puddings. Start by making **Vanilla Cashew Pudding**, and play around with the consistency making it thinner to use as a sauce or thicker as a pudding or cheesecake.



Seed Milk

For example hemp and pumpkin seed milk. Seeds in general are high in minerals, especially calcium and zinc to fight infection, in addition to protein for muscle development. They tend to be slightly bitter and may need to be balanced with a sweetener when used in desserts. Works best as a substitute for lighter milks such as skimmed milk. I rarely use seed milk in baking, however works great in smoothies or lattes.



Rice Milk

Lowest in fat and higher in carbohydrates than other non-dairy milks, it is high on the glycemic index and therefore not the best option for those with diabetes. It has a starchy and watery consistency with a mild naturally sweet flavor. Works best as a substitute for lighter milks such as skimmed milk. Best to avoid using it in baked goods, however it works well in smoothies or on cereal.



Oat Milk

Is high in fiber that helps lower cholesterol and aids in digestion, and has a similar consistency to cow's milk with a mild naturally sweet flavor. Works best as a substitute for semi-skimmed or whole cow's milk. It's super easy to make at home by combining oats and water in a blender and then straining with a cheesecloth or nut milk bag. Because it's relatively higher in sugar compared to other non-dairy milks, it aids in browning when baking which is helpful in vegan cakes especially.

Coconut Milk (Canned)



Is high in the beneficial fat called Lauric acid that is easily absorbed and can be used by the body for energy. It is also high in calories due to the fat content. You can read more about its health benefits [here](#). Its consistency is very creamy with a sweet coconut flavor. Canned is thicker and creamier than the carton variety. It is very versatile in baking and desserts in general. As a substitute for whole cow's milk it's best to use the coconut milk that comes in a carton. When canned coconut milk is cold it separates into cream (and water), which can be used as whipped or heavy cream. It's stable at higher temperatures and great for ice cream, pudding, cheesecakes, and general baking.

Below I've got a list of the best dairy-free options for other dairy products besides milk frequently used in desserts:

Buttermilk

The formula for buttermilk is simple; you mix 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar OR lemon juice with 1 cup non-dairy milk and wait for about 15mins. The milk will curdle and you can use it in any recipe that calls for buttermilk. Keep in mind it will act like butter milk in baking, but it will not taste like it. Acidic buttermilk when combined with baking soda lightens baked goods because it increases the effect of the leavener. Due to the higher pH level of lemon juice compared to apple cider vinegar, the higher acidity results in helping the baking soda react more effectively in baking, so when possible make your buttermilk using lemon juice. I usually use oat, almond or light coconut milk mixed with lemon juice as a replacement for buttermilk.

Whipped Cream Heavy Cream

The best dairy-free alternative for cream is coconut milk. Refrigerate a can of coconut milk for 24 hours then scoop out the cream that has separated from the water. Use as you would whipped cream, and make sure it's always cold before you try to whip it. Keep in mind some canned coconut milk uses guar gum and therefore the cream will not separate properly. Canned Coconut Cream with a higher cream to liquid ratio can also be used. Follow same procedure of refrigerating and skimming off the heavy cream from the water. Use the leftover water for smoothies or chia pudding, it's delicious!

Cream Cheese

Can be home made or store bought. Daiya brand cream cheese is usually available in Kuwait at Save Co. Search online for home made cream cheese recipes to use in your baking. The recipes are usually simple and mostly involve soaked cashews, water, salt and lemon juice. You can use it raw to make frosting, cheesecakes or even ice cream.

Yogurt

Dairy-free yogurt usually comes either made from soy, coconut or almond milk. I've tried making coconut yogurt at home using coconut cream and probiotics and there are many online resources showing you how. Just keep in mind that as with milk, you need to choose the best option for the recipe being made as each yogurt will have a different flavor and consistency.

Sweetened Condensed Milk

Can be made at home using full-fat canned coconut milk with sugar or honey simmered over low heat for 45mins until it thickens. You can find the recipe to make condensed milk here. Try it in your favorite desserts or make a dairy-free Spanish Latte.

To start you off in experimenting with dairy-free desserts, try making these Vegan recipes from my blog - Vanilla Cashew Pudding and Vegan Coconut Chocolate Fondue.



Gluten-Free Baking Guide



For some bakers, experimenting with gluten-free or even grain-free flours is fun...it's a way to expand our baking knowledge and experience. However, for many of you reading this book, you might have jumped straight to this chapter because either you or someone you love has serious health concerns and must avoid gluten at all costs!

For more general information about gluten, you can check out this post. However, for the purpose of this book, we will focus on what are the best flours available and tips for successful gluten-free baking.

Gluten-free flours are either those with no gluten or grain-free. Baking is a science, and when gluten is removed, the chemical process is altered. Therefore, several changes need to be made in the recipe formula to achieve a desirable result. Gluten-free flours generally do not perform like wheat flour.

For a gluten-free flour to behave similarly to wheat flour, 3 or 4 different ingredients need to be blended. You can buy ready-made blends, such as Bob's Red Mill 1:1 Baking Flour.

You can also create your own by using a 2:1 ratio of flour to starch. For example, 1/2 a cup of brown rice flour with 1/2 cup sorghum flour, would need to have 1/2 cup tapioca starch added to it.

Gums such as Xanthan and Guar are also frequently used in gluten-free baking since they help add structure to compensate for the lower protein content of gluten-free flours.

Although there are recipes that work well by merely swapping the wheat flour for a gluten-free mix, in most cases, it's not that simple.

Gluten-free flours may be lighter or heavier depending on what type you are working with and usually tend to be stickier. There are no absolute rules with gluten-free baking, and therefore testing and experimenting are needed to reach the best result.

Some of the most common gluten-free flours available are listed below with tips on how best to use them in baking

Flour Type	Details	Tips & Uses
Oat	Has a sweet profile. Can easily be made at home by grinding rolled oats in a blender or coffee grinder. One and a quarter cup rolled oats makes 1 cup oat flour.	Produces a cake-like crumb adding moisture to baked goods, and is especially helpful when used in cakes, breads, and pancakes. Make sure the oats you buy say they are gluten-free to avoid cross contamination.
Rice	A variety of types available, most commonly brown rice, white rice, and sweet (glutinous) white rice flour.	Sweet white rice flour is the best option for baking, allowing for less use of other starches or gums, and gives baked goods a better texture compared to brown and white rice flour.
Buckwheat	Strong flavor, works well as part of a mix of different flours, comprising no more than %50 of the total. Best to use light buckwheat for sweet baking.	Best in breakfast or tea time desserts such as muffins or coffee cakes. Works well with spices like cinnamon, cardamom, and add-ins (fruit, chocolate, and nuts). Avoid using in delicately flavored desserts.
Millet	Slightly sweet and nutty, this flour is easy to digest, and popular in Africa and some Middle Eastern countries.	Try not to exceed 25% of the total flour used, as it can add some bitterness to your baked goods. I love using it in these Arabic Coffee Date Cookies .
Sorghum	One of the closest in texture and taste to wheat flour, with a mildly sweet nutty flavor.	Best in darker colored deserts such as muffins and cookies. Use between 30-50% of the total flour called for in a recipe.

WORKING WITH NO-GRAIN FLOURS

For some people, any type of grain can result in digestive problems. In such cases, the best option is to use no-grain flours such as finely ground nuts, seeds or legumes. But don't be discouraged if this sounds like you. No-grain flours also add a rich texture and delightful flavors to baked goods that you should absolutely take advantage of.

Examples of no-grain flours and their uses

Flour Type	Details	Tips & Uses
Almond	Rich buttery and nutty flavor, can easily be made at home using the leftover pulp from making homemade almond milk.	Adds a rich texture to cakes and cookies. Limit to between 50-70% of total flour called for in a recipe.
Chestnut	Slightly sweet nutty flavor. A good substitute for almond flour. One of the most expensive.	Best to use light chestnut flour, which pairs well with any baking ingredients. If using dark, limit it to no more than 50% of the total flour used in a recipe. Try it in this Vegan and Gluten-Free Mamoul creation.
Coconut	A very thirsty flour with a slightly sweet coconutty flavor. Very high in fiber with double the protein of whole-wheat flour.	Baked goods using coconut are denser. Best in recipes with eggs. I would avoid it in egg-free recipes. Use to replace no more than 30% of the flour called for in a recipe, while increasing the moisture content to quench this thirsty flour. Delicious in these high-protein pancakes .

Arrowroot	Flavorless white powder identical to cornstarch. Good option for anyone avoiding corn.	Substitute for cornstarch when thickening a sauce or pudding. Adds lightness when combined with other gluten-free products.
Cornstarch	Made from finely ground cornmeal, it is flavorless with no nutritional value. It's best to use organic cornstarch, which is GMO-free.	Very useful in gluten-free baking when used in small amounts, promoting browning, crispiness, and absorption of excess moisture. Works well when combined with other gluten-free flours, especially buckwheat.
Tapioca	A starchy flour from the cassava root, adds elasticity to baking. Can add an assertive flavor if used in large quantities.	Acts as both a binder and thickener in gluten-free baking, adding chewiness and crispiness when needed, as in these pistachio cookies .

Chickpea and Quinoa flour are both examples of common no-grain flours with wonderful health benefits. However, I avoid using them in sweet baking since they have a more savory flavor profile.

An important note on substitutions; when working with gluten-free and grain-free flours, you will discover an enormous variety in flavor and texture. This is why it is best to consider the flavor and texture of the dessert you are making before making the switch.

Another essential tip to remember when substituting is that it's best to measure by weight rather than volume so if the recipe calls for 1/2 cup of oat flour, and you are using almond flour instead, take the weight of 1/2 cup of oat flour in grams, and then use the same weight of almond flour.

It's also important to note that gluten-free flours have a stronger flavor and generally tend to create baked goods with a denser texture. Increase the baking powder and/or baking soda called for in a recipe by 25% to add lightness. Add more flavor by either increasing the amount of sugar, spices, and vanilla or add-ins such as nuts, dried fruit or chocolate in a recipe.

It has become easier and easier to bake delicious desserts that are gluten or grain-free thanks to the widely available ingredients and recipes in books and online. You will have more success if you are consuming dairy and eggs, however dairy-free and egg-free desserts without any gluten are possible and so delicious.

All About Natural Sweeteners



There are several benefits of using alternative sweeteners...not only for health reasons. In this chapter we will explore different options for sweetening your desserts with less or no processed sugar. Alternative more natural sweeteners not only have the advantage of being less processed but many times more nutritious as well. In addition, they also add a dimension of taste and depth to your desserts that processed sugar just can't. The best desserts are those where you can really taste a hint of bitterness from the chocolate, or the balance of acid and sweetness from fruits, or the spiciness of cinnamon and cardamom. If you love your desserts to be decadent and delicious, then I am here to help you health-ify them with alternatives to processed sugar.

I started out experimenting with alternative sweeteners because I had to for health reasons. I was on a dairy-free, no sugar, gluten-free cleanse and I remember making coconut ice cream using honey, and it tasted wonderful. With time I experimented with dates, bananas, apple sauce and maple syrup....this was before options like coconut or date sugar were easily available.

I realized how much tastier desserts can be with these healthier options, so now I actually prefer them, and with time you will feel the same.

Natural sweeteners in general are lower on the glycemic index than refined sugar. However, no one consumes these sugars on their own. By combining them in recipes with whole-grains, healthy fats, and fiber-rich nuts, seeds and fruits, the effect of the desserts on blood sugar will be relatively lower.

As with the other sections of the book, the appropriate

sweetener to use will depend on both the flavor profile and texture you are trying to achieve with the dish.

Each natural sweetener has its unique taste, level of sweetness and moisture content. Many of the sweeteners brown more quickly than white sugar, so it's important to bake at a slightly lower temperature than the recipe calls for.

By experimenting with different recipes you will start to know which sweetener is most appropriate for your recipe.

Generally healthier sweeteners fall into four categories:

Granulated

such as cane, coconut and date sugar. Granular sugars need to be broken down into smaller granules to blend better in desserts.

Liquid

such as honey, maple syrup and agave. Substituting liquid for granular sugar in recipes requires an adjustment in the liquids called for in a recipe, usually by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup per 1 cup of liquid sweetener used.

Fresh or frozen fruit

whole, juiced or pureed.

Fruit Paste

made from dried fruits such as dates, figs or mango.

I've listed below the most popular and most widely available natural sweeteners that I use most often. There are other sweeteners that I have excluded such as Stevia and Yacon Syrup. I prefer to use Stevia only in drinks and Yacon syrup is not widely available and very expensive.

Sweetener	Details	Tips & Uses
<p>Dried Whole Fruits</p>	<p>Dried dates, raisins, apricots, figs, or mango are a great way to add sweetness to a dessert.</p>	<p>Chopped and added to a trail mix, granola or muffins to add flavor and sweetness. Processed with nuts and seeds to make bliss (energy) balls. Or soaked in warm water then blended into smoothies.</p>
<p>Fruit Pastes</p>	<p>Made by soaking dried fruit in hot water until the fruit is soft, then blended with some of the water if needed to create a smooth paste.</p>	<p>Can be used in baking to replace all or part of the sugar. Can also be used to sweeten raw desserts, or dessert toppings. Dates are the sweetest option and has a more neutral flavor compared to other fruit pastes made from dried mango, figs or apricots.</p>
<p>Agave Syrup</p>	<p>Comes both in light or dark amber, very sweet similar to a light honey.</p>	<p>Very versatile due to it's neutral flavor. However it has its critics as it's considered highly processed and high in fructose. Use in puddings, ice cream, frostings and more. Use carefully in baking as can result in sticky cakes.</p>
<p>Brown Rice Syrup</p>	<p>Made from fermented cooked rice, it is popular with low sugar diets since it is fructose-free and less damaging to the liver.</p>	<p>Less sweet than other liquid sweeteners. Very sticky and therefore works especially well in no-bake granola bars. Avoid in cakes as it makes them damp and heavy, also avoid in cookies as it makes them too hard, unless used in combination with other sweeteners, or a crispy cookie is your goal. Best if heated for easy measuring.</p>
<p>Honey</p>	<p>Comes in a variety of flavors, textures and quality.</p>	<p>Sweeter than sugar, use 1/2 a cup honey to substitute 1 cup of sugar in your recipe, while reducing the liquid by about a 1/4 cup. Use in baking, puddings, ice cream, frostings and more.</p>

<p>Maple Syrup</p>	<p>Made by boiling sap from the maple tree down to a syrup. It has a thin and sticky consistency with a medium sweetness level.</p>	<p>Use in baking, puddings, ice cream, frostings and more. Maple flavor not very pronounced.</p>
<p>Molasses</p>	<p>By product of sugar-cane processing, and can contain chemicals used, so it's best to buy organic.</p>	<p>Best to use in small amounts and in combination with other sweeteners due to it's strong flavor. Tastes great in desserts with a toffee flavor.</p>
<p>Date Molasses/ Syrup</p>	<p>Considered a whole-food sweetener, as unlike sugar cane molasses, it is not a by-product of making date sugar. Readily available in middle eastern supermarkets.</p>	<p>Best used in combination with other sweeteners. Makes a delicious drizzle on cakes when combined with tahini.</p> <p>You can also make it at home by boiling dates until soft, then blending until a syrup forms, adding the amount of water needed for the consistency desired.</p>
<p>Coconut Nectar</p>	<p>Derived from the coconut palm, with a dark brown color, thicker than honey, with a low sweetness level.</p>	<p>Use as you would molasses. Avoid in baking.</p>
<p>Whole Cane Sugar</p>	<p>A brown course sugar that contains all the molasses in the cane.</p>	<p>Best to grind to a powder when using, or mixed in with the liquid ingredients to soften and dissolve. Use to replace any brown sugar called for in recipes.</p>

Date Sugar	Derived from dried dates, dark in color and has mostly a coarse consistency.	Add to wet ingredients when baking to dissolve the sugar, especially good if the wet ingredients are warmed up. Not good for creaming into butter for cakes. Use to replace brown sugar, however usually less sweet.
Coconut Sugar	Derived from the juices of coconut palm blossoms, it is light brown with a coarse consistency.	Similar to light brown sugar with a very similar sweetness level. Dissolve in wet ingredients, or grind or powder before using in batter-based desserts. It will darken any light colored desserts. Great in cookies and brownies!

For most people in the Middle East dates are an absolute favorite sweetener (including mine!). Not only are dates delicious and versatile, but are packed with essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals such as potassium for regulating blood pressure, iron for oxygen delivery to your cells, and dietary fiber. There are so many options from whole dates, to date paste, date sugar and date syrup. Check out how I use them in one of these vegan and gluten-free Chocolate Date Cookies, also available to order online, or in this Sticky Toffee Pudding.

Overall try to reduce the amount of sugar called for in a recipe so you can let the other flavors in the desserts shine!

Fat: Friend or Foe?



In baking and all recipes, fats are essential for flavor and texture, providing tenderness and helping to develop color. Although most common fats used in baking are butter or oil, they can also come in the form of whole foods such as nuts, seeds or avocados.

With your desserts, you have two options for creating a healthier version when it comes to fat. Either use a better quality or healthier fat or use less fat overall (or both). However, generally, to achieve an excellent dessert, some fat is necessary..

There has been a lot of controversy over the health benefits and/or risks of saturated and unsaturated fats, which I won't be getting into here. What is not controversial and has been widely recognized, is that Hydrogenated and trans fats are extremely harmful and should be avoided at all costs.

The type of fat you choose to use will be up to you, based on your personal preference and any dietary concerns you might have. Regardless of what fat you select, and I do hope it's the most natural and less refined, it is critical that it is stable at higher temperatures.

Some recipes can be adapted more easily to no or less fat than others. While other recipes will either not work at all, or require considerable changes to the remaining ingredients.

My favorite fats for baking

EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Choose a mild-flavored oil to use in your baked treats and desserts. Can be volatile at high temperatures.

GRAPESEED OIL

Has a neutral flavor works well in all desserts.

COCONUT OIL

Tolerates medium to high heat making it great for baking. Melts at warm room temperature. Can be used melted to replace liquid fats, or solid as needed by a recipe. Great for setting raw or no-bake desserts. Choose the appropriate type of coconut oil depending on the flavor profile of your dessert.

Extra-Virgin: Has a noticeable coconut flavor. Use when coconut flavor enhances a dish.

Refined: Has a mild coconut flavor.

Buttery: Butter flavor, no coconut flavor.

Keep the following tips in mind when using fats or oils in your desserts

Oils must be stored in dark bottles to prevent them from going rancid.

When substituting liquid fat for solid fat, use $\frac{3}{4}$ the amount of liquid fat.

Replace part of the fat or oil called for in a recipe with a seed or nut butter where appropriate. For example, using peanut butter in these **peanut butter cookies** or using **tahini in these cookies**.

Here are some helpful tips on how to reduce oil or fat in baking

Start with half a recipe, only replacing some of the fat, and then depending on the result, decide if it can be reduced further the next time

Keep in mind that the less fat you use, the more sugar is needed to keep the dessert moist and tender

My three favorite ingredients to reduce fat

APPLESAUCE: works well in many recipes with a neutral flavor, adding both moisture and sweetness. Use about half a cup of applesauce for each $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of oil or 1 cup butter. If too much is used, the dessert may turn out too moist.

BANANA PUREE: works well to reduce fat in recipes, but will add a definite flavor. Best used in banana friendly recipes such as bread and muffins.

VEGETABLE PUREE: especially cooked pumpkin or sweet potato can replace about half of the fat in your desserts. They are best used in dense cakes such as quick bread and muffins. Use about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup vegetable puree for each 1 cup fat used in a recipe.



Recipes





Gluten Free



Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Chocolate Date Cookies

There are very few people in this world that don't like dates. And there are probably fewer that don't like chocolate. And both provide a high dose of nutrition assuming we are talking about pure dark chocolate. Dark chocolate can be bitter, and unsweetened chocolate is definitely bitter, and that's why pairing it with sweet dates is just perfect.

The recipe below is vegan, gluten-free and only sweetened with dates (depending on what type of chocolate you add in).

However, the more chocolate the better so definitely don't skip the ganache.

Makes 18-20 cookies

Cookies

You will need...

- 1 cup pitted soft dates
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 tablespoons ground flax
- 1/2 cup coconut oil, melted
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 1 cup almond or chestnut flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup desiccated coconut

Now make it!

Pre-heat the oven to 350F or 160C. Prepare a baking sheet with parchment or silicon mat.

In a bowl, pour the boiling water over the dates, let stand for 5 minutes until softened. Drain the water into a cup reserving the liquid, and transfer the softened dates to a food processor. Add 6 tablespoons of the soaking water to the dates. Add the flax meal, coconut oil and vanilla and process to mix.

In a large bowl, mix the cocoa powder, flour, and baking soda. Stir in the date mixture, and mix.

Take a ball of dough and roll in some unsweetened desiccated coconut. Place on the baking sheet and flatten slightly. Make a well the center with your finger. Bake for 12 minutes, Let cool, and if the hole has closed in, "re-make" it with the end of a wooden spoon (not your finger, it will be hot!)

Once it's cool, fill the hole with dark chocolate ganache.

Dark Chocolate Ganache

You will need...

- 1/4 cup canned coconut milk
- 60g dark chocolate (70% or higher)
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup (optional)

Now make it!

Chop the chocolate and set aside.

Warm up the milk with the maple syrup until it just starts bubbling. Remove from the heat and add the chocolate. Wait for a minute and then stir - the chocolate will melt and blend nicely.

Use immediately to fill up the cookies. Let the ganache cool and harden slightly before serving.





Gluten Free



Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Healthy Date Mamoul

I love mamoul! In this version I created my own versions of mamoul that are easier to make, healthier and taste awesome.

To replace flour I used chestnut and a chia egg instead of a chicken egg. If you can't get hold of chestnut flour, you can replace it with almond flour or more oat flour.

If you don't have mamoul molds, just shape it by hand and make it as pretty as possible. The sesame seeds will hide the imperfections anyway. But when it tastes so delicious, and is so good for you, who cares what they look like!

I love the flavor of aniseed. However if you aren't, then feel free to use cinnamon or cardamom instead.

You will need...

DOUGH

3/4 cup chestnut flour
3/4 cup oat flour
1/3 cup date sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons date syrup
1 chia egg
(1 T chia seed meal with 3 T water)
3 tablespoons coconut oil, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

DATE

130g soft dates
1 teaspoon rose water
1 teaspoon ground aniseeds

TOPPING

2 teaspoons aniseeds
2 tablespoons sesame seeds

Now make it!

Pre-heat the oven to 350F or 160C. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper or a silicone mat.

Start by making the chia egg - mix the chia meal with the water. Set aside for 5-10 minutes until it thickens and has an egg consistency.

To make the filling: combine the dates, ground aniseed, and rose water in a small food processor. Process just until combined. Pinch 14 equal sized pieces of the date paste and set aside while you make the dough.

Combine the flours, sugar, baking soda and salt in a bowl and mix the ingredients together.

Add the syrup, chia egg, coconut oil and vanilla. fold in until well blended and you have a soft dough.

Pinch about a walnut sized piece of dough, totaling 14 pcs. Flatten the dough in the palm of your hand, then add one of the date pieces in the center. Close dough around the date paste and form a ball. Do the same with the remaining dough to form 14 balls in total.

In a small bowl, mix the topping ingredients together. Roll the dough balls in the seed mix. If you have the mamoul mould, then go ahead and use one to make your desired shape. Place on the prepared cookie sheet. Otherwise flatten the rolled ball lightly with your palm. Make a hole in the center with the back of a wooden spoon (or your finger) and place on the cookie sheet.

Bake for 15 minutes. Cool before eating.



Gluten Free



Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Healthy Nutella

I've included this recipe here because it's an important staple to have in any healthy sweet kitchen. You can have it as is or use it as a topping for cake or pancakes or a filling for cookies or use some with dates and oats to make energy balls. It's also easy to make and requires few ingredients so great if you're a beginner. You will need a good food processor though.

You will need...

- 2 cups toasted hazelnuts without skin
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 coconut sugar
- 3 tablespoons cocoa powder
- large pinch of salt
- 1/4 cup warm water

Now make it!

Place the hazelnuts in a food processor and process for about 5 minutes until the nuts turn into a butter. You may need to stop and scrape the side a couple of times.

In a small saucepan over low heat, mix together the maple syrup, 3 tablespoons of water, coconut sugar, cocoa powder and salt, just until the ingredients are blended together. Warming it up helps the sugar and cocoa powder dissolve better.

Remove the saucepan from the heat and slowly add in the hazelnut butter, mixing with a whisk. If the mix seems too thick, add a tablespoon or 2 of warm water.

Transfer to a jar or other container with a lid. Store in the fridge.





Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Pumpkin Pie Bars

These bars are A-M-A-Z-I-N-G, I made sure they were included in this e-book. They are vegan and naturally sweetened. They could easily be wheat-free if you replaced the whole wheat flour with spelt flour. They could probably be gluten-free too if you make sure to use gluten-free oats, and replace the wheat flour with buckwheat or a gluten-free flour blend.

Coconut cream can either be bought as is in a can or carton, however you can also refrigerate a can of regular full-fat coconut milk for 24 hours and the cream will separate from the liquid, and usually you can easily get more than a cup of cream from a can. Store leftover coconut milk in the fridge to use in smoothies or chia pudding, and any extra cream can be whipped up to make these bars extra special.

I like to use Libby's pumpkin puree that comes in a can but homemade can work too.

Almond butter can be replaced with cashew butter or even macadamia. For a nut-free version tahini could probably work, and so would pumpkin or sunflower seed butter.

If you don't have date molasses you can easily replace it with another liquid sweetener or even leave it out.

Rolled oats or quick oats will both work.

I wouldn't use instant oats though.

Whole wheat pastry flour can be replaced with regular whole-wheat flour or all-purpose.

Coconut sugar can be replaced with regular light or dark brown sugar or date sugar.

Maple syrup can be replaced with honey or molasses.

Use any milk of your choice to replace the almond milk

And you can certainly leave out the walnuts but the crunch makes it more interesting. I'm sure pecans, almonds and hazelnuts would also taste great. Pumpkin seeds would be awesome too.

Now I used a food processor for both the filling and base. The filling will be difficult to make smooth by hand, so a hand mixer could probably work. You can also use a blender, but the mixture is quite thick and you will need to stop and scrape the sides many times. The base can certainly be made by hand.

**Okay, I think that's enough talk..
let's get baking!**

You will need...

Pumpkin Filling

- 1/2 cup coconut cream
- 3/4 cup pitted dates
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/4 cup almond butter
- 2 tablespoon date molasses
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoon arrowroot starch
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ginger powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Oat Base & Topping

- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats (quick-cooking works too)
- 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
- 3/4 teaspoon baking sod
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powde
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3/4 cup coconut sugar
- 1/2 cup coconut oil (or butter flavor)
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 50ml almond milk
- 1/2 cup walnuts, roughly chopped

Now make it!

Start by making the pumpkin filling. Pour hot water on the pitted dates and set aside to soften.

Drain the dates and place in a food processor or blender. Add the coconut cream and pumpkin and blend until smooth. Add almond butter, molasses and vanilla, and blend again. Add the remaining ingredients and blend just until smooth. It will be quite thick and you may need to stop to scrape down the sides of the bowl a couple of times.

Transfer the pumpkin filling to a bowl and place in the fridge while you make the base and topping.

Pre-heat the oven to 375F or 180C. Line a 9inch square baking pan (or the equivalent) with parchment paper and place on a baking sheet. Set aside.

To make the oat crust, combine the oats, flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and coconut sugar in a food processor. Pulse a couple of times just to combine the dry ingredients and break the oats into slightly smaller pieces. Add the the coconut oil, maple syrup, almond milk and pulse just until the dry ingredients are nicely moistened and stick together when pinched.

Transfer 1 cup of the oat mixture to a bowl and add the chopped walnuts. This will be the topping. Set aside for now.

Dump the rest of the oat mixture into your prepared pan. Spread evenly and press down to form the base.

Take out the pumpkin filling from the fridge and spread on top of the oat mixture. Sprinkle with the oat walnut topping.

Bake for 30minutes until the filling is set and the topping is golden. Let cool completely and slice into 9 squares (or smaller if you prefer).



Gluten Free



Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Sticky Toffee Pudding

Sticky Toffee Pudding is definitely one of my absolute favorite desserts of all time...it's the non-chocolate equivalent of a chocolate molten cake...it just never gets old. At Crumbs we make one of the best Sticky Toffee cakes in Kuwait! So with that as my benchmark, coming up with a healthier vegan version is quite a challenge. But I am so happy to declare that not only did I think it's amazing.... but even my teenage daughter and her cousins thought it's awesome!

A few notes about the ingredients....

I would expect any non-dairy milk will work in this recipe to replace almond milk. I would avoid coconut milk though just to reduce the overall coconut flavor which is already apparent from the sauce.

Date and sugar cane molasses are both interchangeable in both the cake batter and sauce.

To replace eggs I used both ground flax and aquafaba, I would recommend sticking with the aquafaba but ground chia can be used instead of the flax.

Instead of wheat flour I used a combination of gluten-free oat, almond and sorghum with some arrowroot to lighten it. Cornstarch can also be used instead of arrowroot. While millet can replace the sorghum, it might add a slight bitter taste.

Makes 6-7 portions

You will need...

Cake

- 1 cup pitted soft dates
- 1/2 cup almond milk
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons date molasses
- 2 tablespoons ground flax
- 1/4 cup coconut or grapeseed oil
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 1/4 cup oat flour
- 1/4 cup sorghum (or millet) flour
- 2 tablespoons cornflour / arrowroot starch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 cup aquafaba, cold
- 1/4 teaspoons cream of tartar

Coconut Toffee Sauce

- 250 ml Coconut Milk, full-fat
- 1/3 cup coconut (or whole-cane brown) sugar
- 1 tablespoon sugar cane molasses
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/8 tsp salt

Now make it!

Place the dates in a small bowl and pour over some boiled water. Set aside for a few minutes just to soften.

Pre-heat the oven to 350F or 160C. Prepare 6 ramekins or silicone molds by greasing them well and place on a baking sheet.

In a medium bowl mix together the almond flour, oat flour, sorghum, starch, salt, baking soda and baking powder. Mix to combine.

Drain and place the dates into a blender or food processor. Add the milk, vinegar, date molasses, ground flax, oil, and vanilla. Blend until smooth.

In a separate small bowl, whip the aquafaba with the cream of tartar using a hand-held mixer until stiff peaks, about 1 minute.

Pour the date mixture over the dry ingredients and combine until all the flour has been incorporated. Next add a dollop of the whipped aquafaba just to lighten the mixture slightly, then gently fold in the rest.

Divide the mixture into your ramequins, about 80-100g each. Bake for 20mins until the cake is puffed and set on top, and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

While the cake is baking, make the sauce: In a small saucepan combine the coconut milk, sugar, molasses, vanilla and salt. Simmer over low heat for 15-20mins until the sauce is thick like heavy cream and toffee like.

Once the cakes have cooled a little, invert onto a plate. Serve warm with the toffee sauce poured on top.



Gluten Free



Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Chocolate Peanut Caramel Bars

These bars are easy to make and absolutely deeeeeeecious! They are like a healthy snickers bar YUM! I also love that they are a make ahead dessert. Just store them in the freezer without the chocolate until they day you wish to enjoy them...with guests or just on your own with a cup of tea.

The base of the cookie was made using peanuts and gluten-free oats, and coconut sugar was used to sweeten it a little. I like to bake the base so it firms up a bit. But it is still delicious if you skip the baking; after creating your base just keep it in the fridge while you make the date caramel.

The caramel layer is a recipe that you can use in so many ways (as a topping for a cheesecake or a glaze for a cake?).

I used dates mainly and just a little bit of maple syrup to sweeten it. To make the date paste soak dates in hot water until very soft, then blend with a little bit of the soaking water to make a paste. The addition of coconut oil to the caramel helps it set up when cold, as coconut oil is solid when cold.

So these bars are best eaten slightly cold.

The lacuma and maca powders add a nice caramel flavor, but if you don't have any just leave it out, it will still work.

The chocolate topping is optional but worth it. The bitterness of the dark chocolate pairs beautifully with the sweet caramel. And that sprinkling of coarse sea salt at the end really takes it over the top.

If you are allergic to peanuts you can certainly replace it with almonds, and use almond butter instead of the peanut butter.

Makes 15 bars

You will need...

Shortbread Biscuit Base

- 1/2 cup gluten-free rolled oats
- 3/4 cup gluten-free oat flour
- 1/2 cup roasted peanuts
- 1/2 cup coconut sugar, powdered
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract or paste
- 1/4 cup coconut oil, melted
- warm water as needed

Caramel Peanut Butter Layer

- 1/2 cup smooth peanut butter
- 1/2 cup date paste (see note above)
- 1-2 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon lacuma powder (optional)
- 1 teaspoon maca powder (optional)
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1-2 tablespoons water as needed
- 1/3 cup roasted peanuts, roughly chopped

Topping

- 150g dark chocolate, melted
- Flaky sea salt for sprinkling

Now make it!

Pre-heat the oven to 350F or 160C. Line an 8 inch or 20cm square baking pan with parchment paper, making sure some of the paper comes up two sides. Place on a baking sheet and set aside.

To make the base: Add the oats, oat flour, peanuts, sugar and salt to a food processor. Pulse a few times until the peanuts and oats are chopped. Add the vanilla and coconut oil and pulse a few times to incorporate.

Add water as needed just until the mixture starts to come together and doesn't crumble when you pinch. Transfer the mixture to the pan and press evenly with the back of a spoon or measuring cup to make a firm layer. Bake for 10mins. Let cool.

To make the caramel: In the same food processor (no need to wash it, just wipe it) add the peanut butter, date paste, 1 tablespoon maple syrup, powders if using, coconut oil and salt. Blend until smooth. Taste and decide if it needs more maple syrup or if the consistency needs a little water. It should be thick but pourable. Pour over the now cooled biscuit, and spread evenly. Sprinkle on the peanuts and press slightly into the caramel. Place the pan into the freezer to firm up the bars before slicing, about 30 minutes.

To make the topping: Chop the chocolate and melt in the microwave or a double boiler. In the meantime remove the bars from the freezer and slice into the size you prefer. Place on a parchment paper and carefully pour about 2 teaspoons of melted chocolate over the top. You can use less chocolate and just drizzle lines, or all the chocolate for a thicker chocolate layer. Sprinkle on the sea salt. Once the chocolate is set it's ready to serve. Store any leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days, but I seriously doubt they will last that long.



Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Healthy Besboosa

A healthier version of my vegan besboosa using natural sweeteners.

It is only slightly less sweet, but still delicious and everyone that tried it really loved the taste. I used a combination of honey, coconut sugar and date paste.

To make date paste all you need to do is pour hot water on some pitted dates and leave it for a while to soften. Once softened blend the dates with just a little of the soaking water to get a nice thick paste.

You will need...

Orange Cashew Pudding

- 1/3 cup raw cashews, soaked for 3 hours
- 2/3 cup coconut milk (full-fat, canned)
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons orange zest
- 1 teaspoon orange blossom water

Cake Batter

- 1 cup semolina, mixed course and fine
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 1/2 cup desiccated coconut
- 1/2 cup coconut sugar, powdered
- 1/2 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup oat milk, at room temperature
- 1/4 cup buttery or refined coconut oil, melted and warm
- 2 tablespoon date paste
- 1/2 tablespoon orange blossom water
- 3 tablespoons aquafaba (see note above)
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1/3 cup sliced almonds

Topping

- 2-4 tablespoon honey to drizzle

Now make it!

First make the pudding: drain the soaked cashews and place in the blender with 1/2 a cup of the coconut milk, and honey. Blend until smooth. Transfer to a small saucepan, add the orange zest, and warm up over medium heat, stirring occasionally. In the meantime, mix the remaining coconut milk with the cornstarch until smooth. Once the cashew mixture starts to bubble, quickly add the cornstarch slurry and whisk constantly until the cream is thick like pudding. Remove from the heat and mix in the orange blossom water. Set aside while you make the cake. It will thicken as it cools.

Pre-heat the oven to 375F or 190C. Line your chosen baking pan with parchment paper, grease the sides well. And place on a baking sheet.

In a medium bowl, mix the semolina, almond flour, desiccated coconut, sugar, baking powder and salt. Set aside.

In a small measuring cup mix the milk with the oil, date paste and orange blossom water. Make sure the milk is at room temperature and the oil is warm, otherwise the oil will turn solid. Set aside.

In a small bowl and using a hand held electric mixer, whisk the aquafaba with the cream of tartar until stiff peaks, about 1 minute. Set aside.

Add the milk mixture to the dry ingredients and just mix to incorporate. Next add a few tablespoons of the whipped aquafaba to lighten up the batter, then add the rest of the whipped aquafaba and gently fold in.

Transfer about 60% of the batter (about 1 1/2 cups) to the prepared pan, spreading it to the sides. Bake for approximately 15 mins until the base is just set. Top with the cashew pudding as evenly as you can, leaving a 1cm space without pudding on the sides. Carefully pour over the rest of the batter to cover the pudding spreading it out carefully. Sprinkle the sliced almonds all over or on the edges.

Place the pan on the baking sheet, and bake for about 20 minutes until the cake looks set, and the edges are a darker brown.

While the cake is baking warm up the honey.

As soon as the cake comes out of the oven, pour the honey evenly over the top.

Let cool completely before taking out of the pan. Serve at room temperature or warmed up.



Gluten Free



Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Hummingbird Cupcakes

I have found that teatime cakes, coffee cakes or muffins and quick breads, to be the easiest to health-ify. The batter is easy to mix, no creaming of butter is needed, and usually only 1 or 2 eggs are asked for. Also they have a lot of flavor and can handle a whole-grain flour and the stronger flavors and colors of natural sweeteners.

I used a mixture of aquafaba and flax meal as the egg replacer, and a combination of coconut sugar and maple syrup to replace the sugar. For the flour I used brown rice flour which is gluten-free. However if you have no problem with gluten then you can certainly use whole-wheat or spelt flour instead. In that case, you won't need the arrowroot.

You can have these as muffins and exclude any frosting, they are delicious either way. However if you are okay with dairy then making a simple cream cheese frosting sweetened with a little honey and flavored with vanilla is delicious. You can even use labna instead of cream cheese.

Makes 10 cupcakes

You will need...

- 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed
- 3 tablespoons aquafaba
- 1 cup brown rice flour
- 3 tablespoon arrowroot starch
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 ripe bananas, roughly mashed
- 1/3 cup coconut sugar, powdered
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1/3 cup coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup carrots, grated
- 1/2 cup small pineapple chunks
- 1/3 cup toasted pecans, chopped roughly

Topping

Honey Cream Cheese Frosting (see note above), Toasted coconut, Toasted Pecans

Now make it!

Mix the ground flax with the aquafaba and set aside to thicken. Meanwhile, Pre-heat the oven to 375F or 190C. Prepare your muffin pan with paper liners. Place on a baking sheet and set aside.

In medium bowl sift together the rice flour, arrowroot, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt whisking to combine and set aside while you mix the wet ingredients.

Place the bananas, coconut sugar, maple syrup, coconut oil, vanilla and the flax aquafaba mixture into a food processor and blend until smooth.

Pour the wet mixture over the dry, folding to combine and adding the grated carrot, pineapple chunks and pecans in the final few strokes.

Bake until the cupcakes springs back when lightly pressed with your finger, about 15-18mins. Cool before spreading on frosting and some toasted coconut.





Gluten Free



Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Orange Pistachio Cookies

These cookies are not only gluten-free but grain-free too as I've only used almonds and coconut flour. You need to use slivered (or blanched) almonds to avoid the somewhat bitter skin. I did use crystallized cane sugar though as I didn't want to mask the flavor of the nuts or orange. If you want the cookies sweeter, increase the amount of sugar to 1/2 cup. However I did use a little bit of honey as it works very well with the other flavors in the cookies.

Since the cookies made used ground nuts, there is no need for fat! The fat present in the nuts is more than enough.

As for the egg replacement, I went with aquafaba. Since it's a cookie as apposed to a cake, there is no need to whip the aquafaba.

I used some orange zest and bergamot extract. If you're not a fan, leave them both out and add a teaspoon of vanilla. You can also use cardamom powder and some rose water for a more Middle Eastern flavor....YUM!

Please note that the cookies are soft not crispy, but not cakey either.

Makes 15 mini cookies

You will need...

- 1 cup silvered almonds
- 1/3 cup crystallized cane sugar
- 2 tablespoon honey
- 1/4 cup aquafaba
- 1/2 teaspoon orange zest
- 2-3 drops bergamot extract
- 2-3 tablespoons coconut flour
- 1/3 cup raw pistachios, roughly chopped



Now make it!

Pre-heat the oven to 375F or 190C. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone mat.

In a food processor, process the almonds with the sugar until finely ground.

Add the honey, aquafaba, zest and bergamot and process until smooth about 30 seconds. If the batter seems too loose (you want to be able to roll into a soft ball), add coconut flour a tablespoon at a time until the batter thickens up slightly. Place pistachios in a shallow bowl.

Roll into balls, no more than a tablespoon of batter per cookie, then press into the pistachio to add a generous amount to the top part of the cookie.

Place on the baking sheet, spacing them an inch apart. The cookies should not be a ball, just slightly flattened but still thick.

Once all the cookies are rolled into the pistachio and placed on the baking sheet, bake for 15-20mins until golden brown.

Let cool for 5 mins before transferring to a cooling rack to finish cooling. Store in a an airtight container for up to 5 days.



Gluten Free



Egg Free



Dairy Free



Naturally Sweetened

Healthy Chocolate Cake

You might have seen many chocolate cake recipes using banana, but pumpkin may be something new. You really can't taste it. It adds sweetness, moisture and helps with the eggless-ness. Same thing with the bananas...just make sure they are ripe. Don't have pumpkin, sweet potato works too. You steam the pumpkin (or sweet potato) until soft and then blend.

I've used a combo of aquafaba and flax to act as an egg replacer in this delicious cake. The aquafaba replaces the egg white, while the flax replaces the yolk. If you eat eggs, then use an egg instead of both the flax and aquafaba.

Instead of brown rice flour? You can use spelt or whole-wheat if gluten is not an issue.

Coconut sugar can be replaced by brown sugar, while the maple syrup can be replaced with honey or agave.

Now for the topping...you can make it plain or with chocolate chips. Or a tablespoon of healthy Nutella (p.XX).

Makes 2 7inch cakes OR 12 cupcakes

You will need...

- 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed
- 3 tablespoons aquafaba
- 1 cup brown rice flour
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 2 ripe bananas (about 180-200g)
- 1/3 cup coconut sugar
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1/3 cup coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup dark chocolate chips (optional)

Now make it!

Mix the ground flax with the aquafaba and set aside to thicken. Meanwhile, Pre-heat the oven to 375F or 190C. Prepare 2 7inch cake pans with parchment paper, or your muffin pan with paper liners. Place on a baking sheet and set aside.

In medium bowl sift together the rice flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt whisking to combine and set aside while you mix the wet ingredients.

Place the pumpkin puree, bananas, coconut sugar, maple syrup, coconut oil, vanilla and the flax aquafaba mixture into a food processor and blend until smooth.

Pour the wet mixture over the dry ingredients, and fold together until no more flour streaks remain, adding the chocolate chips if using in the final strokes.

Bake for about 30 minutes until the cake springs back when lightly pressed with your finger. Let cool in the pan for about 10 minutes, before turning out on a wire rack to continue cooling.

Serve as is or with a topping of your choice. Cakes of cupcakes freeze really well and if so will last for over a month, otherwise any leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for 5 days.