

SPECIAL OCCASION HEALTHY DESSERT IDEAS

Strawberries with Balsamic Vinegar

16 oz. fresh strawberries, hulled, and large berries cut in half
2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
¼ cup raw honey
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper, or to taste

Place strawberries in a bowl. Drizzle balsamic vinegar and honey on the strawberries and stir gently. Cover and let sit at room temperature for at least 1 hour (not to exceed 4 hours). Just before serving, grind black pepper over it.

Figs Oozing with Goat Cheese

8 fresh figs
½ cup goat cheese, softened
8 grape leaves, drained and rinsed
½ cup honey
Skewers
Pastry Bag

Caution: Make sure you have real goat cheese. Feta, for example, is sometimes made with cows milk)

Preheat grill on medium heat.

Make a small incision in the bottom of each fig (large enough to hold pastry bag tip). Place goat cheese in pastry bag with plain tip. Fill figs with goat cheese by squeezing a small amount of cheese into the bottom of each fig. The figs will plump up when filled. Wrap each fig with a grape leaf, and skewer 2 to 3 figs on each skewer. Lightly oil the grill grate. Place fig skewers on hot grill. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, turning once. Drizzle with honey, and serve.

Apple Honey Crisp

2 lbs. apples, quartered and sliced
½ cup plus ¼ cup honey (separate)
1 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. nutmeg
1 cup whole wheat flour
¼ cup butter, softened

Toss apples with 1/2 cup honey, cinnamon and nutmeg in bowl. Turn into 2-quart baking dish. For topping, beat flour with butter and 1/4 cup honey until crumbly; sprinkle over apples. Bake at 350°F for 40 to 45 minutes or until apples are tender and topping is golden.

Apricot Honey Oat Bar Cookies

1 ½ cups old-fashioned rolled oats, uncooked
½ cup finely chopped dried apricots
½ cup honey
¼ cup plain goat yogurt
2 egg whites
2 Tbs. wheat germ

2 Tbs. whole wheat flour
3 Tbs. butter, melted
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. vanilla
¼ tsp. salt

Grease an 8-inch square baking pan with butter. Combine all ingredients in large bowl; mix well. Spread mixture evenly into prepared pan. Bake at 325°F about 25 minutes or until center is firm and edges are lightly browned. Cool and cut into 2-inch squares.

Cinnamon-Honey Orange Slices

¼ cup honey
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
4 large navel oranges, peeled and cut into ½" slices

In a medium bowl, mix together honey and cinnamon. Add orange slices; stir gently to coat. Put into small, individual bowls or champagne glasses. Set aside for 15 minutes at room temperature before serving.

Cranberry Pecan Pie

2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
1 cup orange juice
½ cup honey
2 Tbs. cornstarch
2 Tbs. cold water
½ tsp. orange extract
1 9-inch whole grain baked pie shell
½ cup honey
3 Tbs. butter
1 ¾ cups pecan halves

In medium saucepan, combine cranberries, juice and honey. Cook, uncovered, over low heat for 15 minutes if using fresh cranberries or 20 minutes if using frozen berries. Cool. Puree cranberry mixture in blender; return to saucepan. Combine cornstarch and water. Stir into cranberry mixture. Bring to boil and cook until thickened. Stir in orange extract. Cool; then pour into pie shell. Spoon topping (see topping directions below) evenly over cranberry mixture.

Bake at 350°F 20 minutes or until top is bubbly. Cool on wire rack. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Topping: In medium saucepan, combine ½ cup honey and 3 Tbs. butter; cook and stir 2 minutes or until mixture is smooth. Stir in 1 ¾ cups pecan halves until well coated.

Honey Apricot Linzertorte

¾ cup dried apricots
1 cup honey, divided
1 ¼ cups slivered almonds
1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. Real Salt

¼ tsp. ground cloves
10 Tbs. butter, cut into pieces
1 egg
1 egg yolk
1 tsp. grated orange peel
2 Tbs. sliced almonds

In food processor, chop apricots until pureed. With motor running, slowly pour in ¾ cup honey to form a thick paste. Remove mixture and set aside. Place slivered almonds in processor; chop finely. (It is not necessary to wash food

processor between steps of making apricot paste and chopping almonds.) Add flour, cinnamon, salt and cloves; process until well blended. Add butter, remaining ¼ cup honey, egg, egg yolk and orange peel; process until mixture is thoroughly blended and forms a ball. Divide dough in half. Press one half of dough evenly into bottom and up sides of lightly greased 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom. Spread honey-apricot paste over dough. Spoon remaining half of dough into pastry bag fitted with a plain tip, about ½ inch wide. Pipe dough in a lattice pattern over filling. Sprinkle with sliced almonds. Bake at 325°F for 45 minutes or until crust is lightly browned and filling is bubbly. Cool tart before removing from pan.

Honey Cherry Granola Bars

1/3 cup pure honey	½ tsp. almond extract
¼ cup butter, melted	3 cups granola
3 egg whites	½ cup almonds, coarsely chopped
1 tsp. cinnamon	¾ cup dried cherries

Preheat oven to 350°F. Whisk together honey, butter, egg whites, cinnamon and almond extract. Stir in granola, almonds and cherries. Spoon granola mixture into 9-inch, well-greased square pan. Using a piece of wax paper, firmly press granola mixture in pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove pan from oven and place on a cooling rack. Cool completely; cut into bars.

Honey Macaroons

¼ cup honey	1 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
1 egg, beaten	1 cup dates, pitted and coarsely chopped
1 tsp. vanilla	2 Tbs. whole wheat flour
2 cups coconut, shredded	

Combine honey, egg and vanilla in medium bowl. Beat to blend. Stir in coconut and nuts. Coat dates with flour in a small bowl. Add to mixture and stir to combine. Have oven heating to 325°F. Drop batter by tablespoonfuls onto a greased baking sheet. Bake at 325°F for 12 minutes or until slightly browned. Remove from sheet and cool on wire racks.

Honey Orange Jello

1 package unflavored gelatin	2 Tbs. honey
1 cup water, very hot	1 orange, peeled, sliced thin
¼ tsp. Real Salt	½ cup carrot, shredded
½ cup orange juice	3 Tbs. lemon juice

Soften gelatin in orange juice – add honey, salt and lemon juice, and mix well. Cool. Add carrots and orange slices. Chill until firm.

Honey Pumpkin Mousse

4 eggs, separated	1 ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
¾ cup honey	½ tsp. ground ginger
1 can (16 oz.) solid-pack pumpkin	¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
2 Tbs. whole wheat flour	¼ tsp. salt

In top of double boiler, combine egg whites and honey. Cook over simmering water, stirring constantly, until mixture reaches 160°F; transfer mixture to a medium bowl. Using electric mixer on high speed, beat egg whites until cool and glossy peaks form; set aside. In medium saucepan, combine egg yolks, pumpkin, flour, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils; remove from heat. Gently stir ¼ of beaten egg whites into pumpkin mixture; gradually fold remaining egg whites into lightened mixture. Spoon mousee into dessert glasses; cover and chill.

Honey Rhubarb Compote

2/3 cup honey
1 cup water
4 cups rhubarb, washed, trimmed, cut into ½ inch pieces

½ tsp. vanilla
2 Tbs. cornstarch
3 Tbs. cold water

Dissolve honey in water in large non-aluminum saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add rhubarb. Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, 15 to 25 minutes or until rhubarb is tender but still in distinct pieces. Stir in vanilla. Combine cornstarch with 3 Tbs. water; mix well. Gradually stir cornstarch mixture into rhubarb; cook and stir until mixture comes to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 3 to 5 minutes or until mixture thickens. Pour into serving bowl and refrigerate until cold.

Honey-Caramelized Bananas and Oranges

2 large bananas
1 orange, peeled and sliced
¼ cup honey
2 Tbs. chopped walnuts

Peel and cut bananas in half lengthwise; place in small flameproof dish with orange slices. Drizzle with honey; sprinkle with walnuts. On top rack of preheated broiler, broil fruit about 5 minutes or until heated but not burnt. Remove from broiler.

Almond Cream

1 cup blanched almonds
1 teaspoon vanilla
¼ cup maple syrup
¾ cup water

Blend until smooth and creamy. Use in place of whipped cream.

Maple Walnut Pie

Serves 6 to 8.

2 tbsp. butter
1/4 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup maple syrup

1/2 cup water (use fresh maple sap in season)
3/4 cup walnut halves or pieces
Whole wheat pastry for one 8" or 9" pie shell

Melt butter in small saucepan. Add flour all at once. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is golden brown. Add syrup and water and cook, whisking constantly until thickened. Allow to cool for 10 minutes. Add nuts. Pour warm filling into prepared pie shell. Bake at 350°F on center rack of oven 35 to 40 minutes or until filling is set and crust is golden brown. Cool on wire rack. May be decorated with nuts, pastry maple leaves, etc.

Brazil Nut Truffle Cookies

1 cup brazil nuts, ground to flour
½ cup coconut flour
½ cup organic dried, unsulfured apricots, chopped
¼ cup fresh grated or organic unsweetened shredded

coconut
1/3 cup agave
1 teaspoon vanilla extract or 1/2 vanilla bean

Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until the dough turns into a ball. Scoop out a spoonful of dough and shape into round balls. Start an assembly line from left and right – line up the truffle cookies, then a bowl or cup with enough agave to coat truffle cookies, a small bowl/cup with coconut flakes or chopped brazil nuts, and then a clean

plate. Work from left to right – take one truffle cookie with your left hand and dip in agave, then drop into the coconut or brazil nuts, and with your right hand roll truffle cookies in coconut/brazil nuts and place on plate.

Banana Cream Pie with Sweet Walnut Crust

Sweet Walnut Crust:

1 cup walnuts
¾ cup chopped dried apricots
¼ [2-3] chopped dates, or raisins
1/3 cup agave

Cream Filling:

1 cup cashews
2 bananas
½ vanilla bean or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoons psyllium husk powder, optional

Topping:

2 - 3 bananas, cut into ½ inch rounds

For Sweet Walnut Crust: Place the first three ingredients in the food process and process into a moist meal. While the processor is running slowly pour in the agave until the mixture turns into a ball. Press sweet crust into 9-inch pie dish to form piecrust. Set aside.

For Filling: Place all ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth.

For Topping: Cut bananas into ½-inch rounds.

Pour the cream filling into the sweet piecrust. Top with sliced bananas in a circular pattern for a pretty presentation.

Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Cantaloupe Snow Cone

4 cups cantaloupe chunks, peeled, seeds removed
1 tablespoon agave, optional

Blend the cantaloupe chunks in a blender or process in a food process. Pour the cantaloupe juice into a freezer friendly container and place in the freezer. When the cantaloupe juice is frozen, remove the container from the refrigerator and allow the cantaloupe ice to thaw just a bit, about 10 minutes. Begin shaving the top of the cantaloupe ice with an ice cream scoop or sturdy utensil. Continue until you have enough shaved ice to create a snowball. Use a glass with a short bowl and wide enough rim to pack in the shaved ice. Pack the shaved ice up to the rim, then top with more shaved ice and shape to create a dome. Serve immediately and enjoy.

Apple and Grape Parfait with Mint Infused Orange Juice

1/3 cup orange juice, fresh squeezed
12 mint leaves, finely chopped
1 ½ tablespoon cold pressed extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 teaspoon organic vanilla extract (optional)

A pinch of cinnamon
1 Gala apple, peeled, cored and diced
1 cup mixed grapes, sliced in half

Pour the orange juice into a small mixing bowl or cup. Add the chopped mint leaves, olive oil, vanilla extract, and cinnamon, mix well and set aside. Make four layers by alternating in each glass the chopped apples, then the sliced grapes; repeat with the remaining chopped apples and sliced grapes. Stir the mint infused orange juice and pour over the fruit in each glass. Garnish with mint sprigs and sprinkle with a dash of cinnamon.

Raspberry Tarts

Sweet Almond Crust:
1 cup almonds, soaked and dried
¼ cup fresh grated or organic unsweetened shredded coconut

6 Medjool dates, pits removed
1 tablespoon agave
1 teaspoon rose water
1 teaspoon organic vanilla

Place the almonds in a food processor and process until it reaches a crumbly-grainy consistency. Add coconut and dates and process until the dates are broken down and mixed in well with the almonds. Add the remaining ingredients and process until well incorporated. Place enough crust mixture into a tart pan (in the ball-park of 8 x 11) or in individual tartlette pans and shape and mold the crust to the pan. A springform tart pan is great for ease of removing the crust. If

you don't have one on hand, consider brushing a little coconut oil in the tart pan before the crust mixture. If you are shaping the crust freehand (as I did) turn the crust mixture out onto a cookie sheet lined or wooden cutting board. Flatten the crust to the desired thickness and form into the shape desired using a cookie cutter or a knife to cut out squares or rectangles. Chill the crust in the refrigerator for an hour or until ready to use.

Raspberry Sauce

1 cup fresh raspberries
1 tablespoon agave
½ teaspoon fresh lime juice
½ teaspoon rose water

Add all ingredients to a food process and process until the raspberries turn into a sauce. Place a strainer over a large measuring cup or bowl and pour the raspberry sauce into the strainer. Take a small rubber spatula or spoon and stir and press the raspberry sauce through the strainer. Continue until all the raspberry sauce is in the bowl and only the raspberry seeds remain in the strainer. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Assemble the tart: Remove the tart crust and raspberry sauce from the refrigerator. Spread the raspberry mixture over the sweet almond crust and top with fresh raspberries and serve. The components of this tart can be made a day ahead and kept refrigerated. Assemble when ready to serve.

Note: Remember presentation is half of it! Serve in special dishes, a champagne glass instead of a cereal bowl, add a sprig of fresh mint, etc. Use color and texture for "eye candy" appeal.