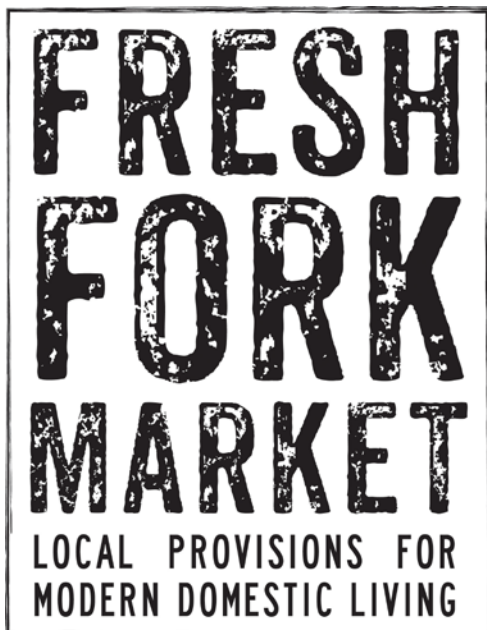


Just Desserts



Just because you are trying to live a healthier lifestyle and eat local, does not mean that you have to say goodbye to sweets and desserts. You can still satisfy that sweet tooth on occasion, while maintaining your commitment to eating well. We hope to offer you some healthier alternatives for desserts and arm you with the information that you need to make your own recipes healthier.

Using Whole Grains

Substituting whole grain flours for white flour is a great way to get more nutrition in the end product. Whole grain flours include the bran (which adds fiber), the germ (the source of protein for the seed) and the starch. White flours are just the starch and have the bran and germ removed. This makes them basically starch, which is converted rapidly by the body into maltose.

Whole wheat flour will sub in exact proportions, as long as it is the same type of flour. Use whole wheat all purpose flour for white all purpose flour, for example. Be sure to sift whole wheat flour more, as it is denser and sifting will add more air to the mix. Avoid over mixing, as gluten develops more in whole wheat flour, and it is easier to make your end product chewier. Wheat flour is drier than white flour, so it is often helpful to increase the liquid in the recipe by a small amount or to decrease the baking time slightly.

Alternative Sweeteners

When using alternative sweeteners in established recipes, you may need to experiment. Sometimes, you will need to adjust the oven temperature when baking, as most alternative sweeteners will caramelize at a lower temperature than refined sugar. When using a liquid sweetener, you may have to adjust the other liquids in the recipe and adjust baking times to compensate for the different ingredients.

But why choose alternative sweeteners at all? First off, many offer nutritional values. While refined white sugar has little or no nutritional value at all, alternative sweeteners offer some benefits.

Honey offers antioxidant benefits to protect the body against free radicals and is considered the healthiest sweetener for people with type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol, according to the George Mateljan Foundation's website, *The World's Healthiest Foods*. It also contains trace amounts of a variety of vitamins and minerals.

Sorghum syrup has a host of goodness in it. In just one tablespoon, you will find 300 mg protein. You will also find calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, and zinc. Most of these are in about 5% of RDA, but for a sweetener that is pretty darn good.

Maple syrup also offers some nutritive values, and is generally sweeter, meaning you can use less.

The simple sugars in foods that are most important to human nutrition are called sucrose, fructose, lactose, and maltose. But the body wants the simple sugar called

glucose, so these other simple sugars break apart in the body to become glucose. They do this by coming apart easily at the water connections. Lactose is found in milk and maltose is found in grains. Sucrose is plain sugar, think table sugar. Fructose comes from fruit.

So, different types of sugar have different effects on the body due to their glycemic index. The glycemic index basically measures how the body's body sugar levels are elevated by different products. The lower the GI, the better it is on the body. Table sugar ranks about 65. Maple syrup, sorghum and honey are not a lot better, registering at about 50. However, much of these natural sweeteners are sweeter and require less to attain the same sweetness.

Honey

Honey can easily be substituted for sugar. Due to honey's ability to retain water, products made with honey tend to remain moister longer than similar products made with sugar or other sweeteners. Lighter honey has milder flavor than darker honey. Use equal amounts of honey for sugar up to one cup. At one cup or more, replace each cup of sugar with 2/3 to 3/4 cup over honey depending upon the sweetness desired. Lower the baking temperature 25 degrees and watch your time carefully since products with honey brown faster. In recipes using one cup honey for sugar, it may be necessary to reduce liquids by 1/4 cup per cup of honey. In baked goods, add 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda per cup of honey if baking soda is not already included in the recipe. This will reduce the acidity of the honey, as well as increase the volume of your product. Moisten a measuring spoon or cup first with water, oil, or an egg before measuring the honey to prevent it from sticking to the measuring utensil. Honey is heavy by weight. A 12 ounce jar equals one standard 8 ounce cup.-*from Cooks.com*

Sorghum

Sorghum is a grass. It has long been used as a sweetener, but remains popular only in the south. Sorghum can be used to replace molasses. In non-baking applications (such as meat sauces, barbecue sauces, baked beans, etc.) sorghum can be substituted for molasses on a one-for-one basis. In baking recipes (such as cookies and cakes), sorghum should be substituted for molasses one-for-one, but it is necessary to cut the amount of sugar or honey used in the recipe by 1/3 of the amount specified. This is because sorghum is sweeter than molasses.

In replacing ordinary sugar with sorghum, increase the amount of sorghum by 1/3 over the amount of sugar called for in the recipe. At the same time, decrease the amount of liquid (milk and/or water) by this same amount. This is to keep the amount of total liquids and sugars in balance.

Maple syrup is made from the sap of sugar maple trees. The sap is boiled down into a sweet, delectable syrup. Grade B is thicker, darker, and is better for baking because it

has a stronger flavor--and it costs less. Use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup for every cup of white sugar and decrease the amount of liquid by 3 tablespoons to compensate for its liquid state.

Oil

A great substitute for oil is applesauce. It will only mildly affect the flavor. You can substitute applesauce on a one for one basis, and use applesauce without sugar. You can also add in a small amount of oil (about 1 tsp per half cup of applesauce) to improve the texture of the final product.-*eHow.com*

Fresh Ginger-Spiced Sorghum Cake

2 Tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 1/2 cups plus 1 teaspoon all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 sticks or 8 ounces unsalted butter, at room temperature
1/3 cup honey
1 cup sweet sorghum syrup
4 Tablespoons grated, peeled fresh ginger
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 eggs, lightly beaten

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Using a pastry brush, grease a nonstick bundt pan with butter and dust with 1 teaspoon of the flour, tapping out excess. Sift remaining flour, baking powder, ground ginger, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and salt together into a bowl and set aside.

2. Place butter into a mixing bowl and beat with an electric mixer on high speed until fluffy. Add honey and beat well. Add sorghum and grated ginger and beat well. Add one-third of the flour mixture at a time, folding in thoroughly after each addition. Dissolve baking soda in 1 cup boiling water and beat into flour mixture on medium speed, and then beat in eggs, one at a time.

3. Pour batter into prepared pan, smoothing out top. Bake until toothpick inserted into center of cake comes out clean, about 40 minutes.

4. Let cake cool completely in pan on a cooling rack, then invert onto a cake plate. Serve as is or with Maple Syrup Bavarian.

Poppyseed Honey Cookies

Makes 5-6 dozen

3 cups flour

¼ cup poppy seeds

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

1 ½ cups honey

8 tablespoons/4 ounces unsalted butter, softened

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 eggs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, poppy seeds, baking powder and salt; set aside.
2. In a stand mixer, fitted with the paddle attachment, beat ½ cup of the honey, butter and vanilla until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each addition; on low speed mix in the dry ingredients. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and gently mix to combine. Remove the dough and form into a disk, slice in half. Roll each half on a floured work surface until ¼" thick, transfer to a baking sheet and chill.
3. Cut out 1½"-wide diamonds from dough; transfer to parchment-lined baking sheets. Bake until golden, 12–15 minutes. Meanwhile, boil the remaining 1 cup honey and ⅓ cup water in a saucepan. Place all cookies in a single layer on one of the baking sheets; pour over honey. Let sit for 10 minutes before serving.



Black Walnut-Maple Squares with Sautéed Berries

Serves 8-10

8 Tablespoons/4 ounces unsalted butter, cubed and chilled,

1 cup plus 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour

1/4 cup plus 2/3 cup honey

1 cup maple syrup

1 cup chopped black walnuts

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

2 eggs, lightly beaten

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

1. Butter and flour an 8" square baking pan; set aside.
2. In a food processor, process the cold butter cubes, 1 cup flour, and 1/4 cup honey combined; transfer to pan and press evenly into bottom. Bake until lightly browned, about 15 minutes.
3. Whisk remaining flour and honey with maple syrup, black walnuts, salt, and eggs in a bowl; pour over baked crust. Bake until filling is golden brown and set, 30 to 35 minutes.
4. Serve warm plain or with sautéed fresh berries



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Strawberry Compote with Honey Custard

Serves 6

1 vanilla bean, scraped
1 cup heavy cream
2 Tablespoons honey
6 egg yolks

Strawberry Compote
3 Tablespoons unsalted butter
1 lb strawberries (*hulled and diced*)
3 Tablespoons honey
zest and juice of 1 orange

1. Create a double boiler with a saucepan fitted with a bowl and bring water to a simmer.
2. Place the heavy cream in a bowl and scrape the vanilla bean into the heavy cream, place on top of the double boiler, cook until hot.
3. Whisk in honey, then transfer a tablespoon or two of the hot cream to your beaten eggs, whisking vigorously to temper.
4. Transfer the tempered egg yolks into the cream and continue stirring slowly until the custard is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Transfer to a bowl and allow to cool while you prepare the compote.
5. To make the compote, melt the butter in a saucepan over a moderate heat, then toss in the strawberries and sauté in butter until softened, about five to six minutes.
6. Stir in honey and the juice and zest of one orange; reduce the heat to medium-low and continue to cook another three to four minutes until the berries are softened, but not mushy.
7. Transfer to a serving dish and serve top with honey custard.



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