

Hummus

1 Can drained chick peas
Juice of 1 lemon
2 Cloves of garlic, peeled
1/4 Cup Tahini (sesame seed paste)
1/3 to 1/2 cup water
Sea salt to taste

Combine all ingredients, except for the water and salt in a food processor. Pulse on and off until mixed well. Gradually add enough water to make a smooth and creamy consistency. Add salt to taste.

Enjoy with pita bread, whole grain crackers or cut up raw veggies.

Serving size: 2 Tablespoons

Nutritional information per serving: Calories 83, Fat 4.7grams, Fiber 3grams, protein 3.4grams.

Date Bran Jingle Balls

A quick, easy, no-bake date-nut balls to fill that special niche in your holiday repertoire.

16 cookies | Active Time: 25 minutes | **Total Time:** 55 minutes

2 cups bran flakes cereal
3/4 cup whole pitted dates
1/2 cup pecans, toasted
3 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons cream cheese, softened
2 teaspoons brandy, orange liqueur or orange juice
1/2 cup finely chopped nuts, date sugar, coconut or toasted wheat germ

Place cereal, dates and pecans in a food processor and process until finely chopped. Add honey, cream cheese and brandy (or orange liqueur or orange juice) and pulse until a stiff dough forms.

Scoop tablespoon-size portions and shape with greased hands into balls. Roll each ball in chopped nuts (or date sugar or coconut or wheat germ). Place on wax paper. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving or storing.

Nutrition

Per cookie : 104 Calories; 6 g Fat; 1 g Sat; 3 g Mono; 2 mg Cholesterol; 14 g Carbohydrates; 1 g Protein; 2 g Fiber; 42 mg Sodium; 111 mg Potassium

Make Ahead Tip: Store in an airtight container, separating balls with layers of wax paper, in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Nikki's Healthy Cookie Recipe

You can use unsweetened carob, or grain sweetened chocolate chips. You can make your own almond meal by pulsing almonds in a food processor until it is the texture of sand - don't go too far or you'll end up with almond butter. And lastly, the coconut oil works beautifully here, just be sure to warm it a bit - enough that it is no longer solid, which makes it easier to incorporate into the bananas.

3 large, ripe bananas, well mashed (about 1 1/2 cups)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 cup coconut oil, barely warm - so it isn't solid (or alternately, olive oil)
2 cups rolled oats
2/3 cup almond meal
1/3 cup coconut, finely shredded & unsweetened
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon fine grain sea salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
6 - 7 ounces chocolate chips or dark chocolate bar chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees, racks in the top third.

In a large bowl combine the bananas, vanilla extract, and coconut oil. Set aside.

In another bowl whisk together the oats, almond meal, shredded coconut, cinnamon, salt, and baking powder. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and stir until combined. Fold in the chocolate chunks/chips. The dough is a bit looser than a standard cookie dough, don't worry about it. Drop dollops of the dough, each about 2 teaspoons in size, an inch apart, onto a parchment (or Sil-pat) lined baking sheet. Bake for 12 - 14 minutes. I baked these as long as possible without burning the bottoms and they were perfect - just shy of 15 minutes seems to be about right in my oven.

Makes about 3 dozen bite-sized cookies.

Honey-sweetened Thumbprint Cookie Recipe

2/3 cup honey
1/3 cup warm coconut oil or clarified butter
1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
3/4 cup rolled oats
1 tablespoon all natural cornstarch (or arrowroot)
scant 1/2 teaspoon fine grain sea salt
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
zest of one lemon
your favorite jam or preserves (preferably fruit sweetened) - berry goes nicely

Preheat the oven to 350F, rack in the top 1/3. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a large mixing bowl pour the warm, melted coconut oil over the honey and whisk in the vanilla extract. In a separate medium bowl combine the flour, oats, cornstarch/arrowroot, sea salt, baking soda, and lemon zest. Add the flour mixture to the honey and stir until just combined. Let the dough sit for 2-3 minutes. Stir once or twice again - the dough should be quite stiff.

Roll the dough into balls, one level teaspoonful at a time, and place an inch or so apart on the prepared baking sheets. These will spread. Use a (damp) pinky finger or the back of a very tiny spoon to make a well in the top of each ball of dough. Fill each "well" to the top with 1/8 teaspoon of jam. If you chill the dough at this point for an hour, the cookies won't spread as much.

Bake for 7 - 9 minutes or until the bottom and edges of the cookies are just golden. Resist the urge to over-bake, these tiny guys dry right out.

Makes a few dozen cookies.

Baking Tips

Here are some tips that you need to know about substituting natural sugars for regular sugar when baking cookies.

1 – Honey is a good substitute for granulated sugar on a one-to-one ratio by weight. However, you have to reduce other liquids in cookie recipes by 1/4 cup for each cup of honey used.

2 - When using **Maple syrup**, you need to do a little math to replace the sugar called for in your recipe. Divide weight of sugar by 0.80 to determine weight of syrup. Reduce the amount of water or other liquids in cookie recipes by the

weight difference. For example: to substitute for 8 ounces of granulated sugar, use 10 ounces of syrup, and reduce the amount of liquid by 2 ounces.

3 – Agave, taken from the same plant tequila is made from, this sweetener is far easier on blood sugar because your body processes it as a complex carbohydrate instead of as a simple sugar. Agave can be substituted for sugar in equal amounts by weight (not volume). But agave is sweeter than sugar, so you must also sweeten by taste. I usually reduce agave by 1/4 cup. But again, adjust to your tastes.

4 – Benefits of substituting liquid sweeteners for granulated sugar are:
Unique flavor – honey, molasses, syrups – each adds its own distinctive flavor to homemade cookies
Softer, moister, chewier cookies with better shelf life

Honey Sweetened Almond Cookies

1 Cup Ground Almonds
1/4 Cup Honey (If you're feeling adventurous, try Agave instead)
2 Egg Whites

Beat egg whites until stiff. In a second bowl, mix the almonds and honey together. Pour into the egg whites, and fold under. With a teaspoon, scoop a small clump onto a buttered cookie sheet or sil-pat sheet (They will stick to parchment paper.) Place on the lowest shelf in your oven, and bake at 300

degrees for 25-30 minutes. They should be light to medium brown in appearance.

Also, the eggs must be very stiff. So beat them well. You know they're stiff enough if you turn the bowl upside down and nothing falls out.

One last note, be sure to let these cool on the cookie sheet really, really well. If they are too warm they will shred apart. If you have let them cool, and they still come apart, then you didn't bake them long enough. Fortunately, even after they have cooled, you can put these back in the oven for a while.

Honey Tahini Cookies

wheat free, dairy-free, egg-free, and packed with energy and natural, earthy sweetness... just right for before or after a nice yoga class, and very warming during the cool damp spring season.

- 1 cup tahini
- 1 cup honey, agave nectar, brown rice syrup or maple syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup raisins or prunes, roughly chopped, and soaked & drained

3 cups quick cooking oats, coarsely processed
1 cup chopped walnuts, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, or mixture

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease cookie sheets.

In a medium bowl, stir together the tahini, honey, vanilla, cinnamon and soaked dried fruit. Mix in nuts/seeds and oats until well blended. For drop cookies, drop by teaspoonfuls onto the prepared cookie sheets. For smoother texture, wet hands and form into balls the size of a golf ball and flatten lightly with wet fingers.

Bake for 10 minutes in the preheated oven, or until edges are slightly brown. Cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes before removing to wire racks to cool completely. Makes about 4 dozen (2 large cookie sheets).