

Healthy holiday recipes

Cranberry sauce and ginger cookies are two of many Christmas (or any holiday) favourites. Here are healthier versions of both, without added refined sugars.

Cranberry Sauce

Ingredients:

2c fresh or frozen cranberries
½ c chopped dates (about 10-12 dates)
½ c unsweetened applesauce
½ c unsweetened orange juice
(Optional) ¼ tsp sea salt (helps to tone down tartness)

Combine all ingredients (except salt) in a saucepan and cook on low heat until it is a thick, soupy mass. Frequently stir and mash the mixture with a potato masher.

Once the mixture is soft and well mashed, turn off the heat and add salt while cooling.

For a smoother texture, blend in a blender after it cools. If you don't have a blender, mash it well with the potato masher or a fork, which should be easy to do once the mixture is soft from cooking.

After it has cooled, store the cranberry sauce in an air-tight container in the refrigerator. Best to use up within seven days or freeze for future use.

Gingerbread Cookies

Ingredients:

- 2 cups almond 'flour' (or use oat, spelt or other flour).
- 1 TB unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- 12 dates, chopped (about ½ cup)
- 1 banana
- 1/3 cup milk (can also use coconut, rice, oat, or almond milk).
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 180 C (350 F). Combine flour, cocoa powder, pumpkin pie spice, and salt. Set aside. Blend the dates, banana, milk, and vanilla until smooth, using a high-power blender or a food processor.

Add blended mixture to dry mixture and combine without over mixing. If the batter seems too soft and sticky, freeze the batter for 15 minutes until it is easier to work with (or use your choice of flour instead of almond flour).

Drop by rounded balls onto a non-stick or lightly greased baking sheet. Flatten with a fork to no more than ½ inch thick. (TIP: Other tips for working with sticky batter is to keep washing your hands as you form the balls, and as you flatten the cookies with the fork, occasionally wipe the fork on a damp paper towel).

The recipe yields about 18 cookies. Bake for 12 minutes. Cookies will be soft and lightly golden at the bottom. Leave to cool on the baking tray (the cookies harden as they cool).

NOTE: This cookie recipe was updated in April 2022.

Enjoy these recipes and have a happy holiday!

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