

Healthy holiday recipes

Cranberry sauce and ginger cookies are two of many Christmas (or any holiday) favorites. 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 very soft and well mashed, shut off the heat and add the salt while it is cooling.

For a smoother mixture, put it in a blender after it cools and blend until smooth. 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 7 days or freeze for future use.

Gingerbread Cookies

Ingredients:

1 ¾ cup ground almond 'flour' (or use oat, spelt or other flour of your choice).
1 TB unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
12 dates, chopped (about ½ cup)
1 banana
1/3 cup water or milk (can use rice or almond milk, etc.).
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

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

Add blended mixture to dry mixture and combine well. Drop by rounded balls onto a baking tray lined with parchment paper. Flatten to no more than ½ inch thick.

The recipe yields about 12-15 cookies. Bake for about 12 minutes. Cookies will be soft and slightly golden at the bottom. Leave to cool on the baking tray (the cookies harden slightly as they cool).

Enjoy these recipes and have a happy holiday!

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