

Individual Chocolate Almond Pudding Cakes

This dessert is very chocolaty delicious! Dark or Dutch-process cocoa is simply cocoa which has been treated with an alkalizing agent to make it less acidic. It darkens the color, but it is not higher in antioxidants than regular natural cocoa. Many companies, including Hershey's, now sell a blend of regular and Dutch process cocoas.

Cakes:

½ cup all purpose flour
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup dark cocoa (I used Hershey's Special Dark)
¼ cup almond flour (see directions to make your own, below)
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla
¼ teaspoon almond extract
3 tablespoons canola oil
1 large egg
½ cup milk

Topping:

½ cup sugar
2 tablespoons dark cocoa
Pinch of salt
1 cup boiling water

Method: To make your own almond flour, grind about a heaping ¼ cup of slivered or whole blanched almonds in a coffee or spice grinder, which has been wiped clean. Be careful not to grind too much or you'll have paste. Just grind to a fine powder. Ready made almond flour can also be purchased from mail order sources, such as King Arthur Flour or Bob's Red Mill.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Spray 8 custard cups with non-stick baking spray. To make the cakes: Whisk together the flour, sugar, cocoa, almond flour, salt and baking powder. Whisk in the vanilla, almond extract, oil, egg and milk. Divide among the 8 custard cups, using about 2-3 tablespoons for each.

Make the topping: Whisk together the sugar, cocoa, and salt. Divide among the cups, using about 1 heaping tablespoon for each one. Top each cup with about 2 tablespoons of the boiling water. Place cups on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake the cakes for about 18 minutes. The cakes should be puffy with liquid boiling up around the edges. Serve warm. Nutrition info. per serving: 200 calories, 8 gm fat, 1 gm sat. fat, 140 mg. sodium, 29 gm carbs, 1 gm fiber, and 3 gm protein. Recipe adapted from King Arthur Flour.

Chocolate Waffles

Not necessarily for breakfast, but rather for a fabulous dessert or snack. These fudgy waffles can be frozen and reheated in the toaster or microwave. Fresh fruit or frozen vanilla yogurt would make a delicious topping! My 8-inch round waffle iron made about 5 waffles, using about 2/3 cup of batter for each. The nutrition info. is for half of one of my 8-inch waffles.

2 large eggs
¼ cup canola oil
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup flour
¾ cup sugar
½ cup natural cocoa
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ cup chopped walnuts
½ cup mini chocolate chips

Method: Preheat waffle iron according to directions for your own waffle maker. I sprayed mine with non-stick baking spray. In a large mixing bowl, combine the eggs, oil, vanilla and beat until light about 2 minutes. Then blend in the buttermilk. Stir in dry ingredients until combined. Gently fold in nuts and chocolate chips. Bake in waffle iron according to manufacturer's directions. Cool waffles on a rack while baking the remainder. Nutrition info. for 1/10th of this recipe: 270 calories, 14 gm fat, 3 gm sat. fat, 180 mg. sodium, 35 gm carbs, 3 gm fiber, 6 gm protein.

Recipe adapted from King Arthur Flour.

Low-Fat Chocolate Sauce

½ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup natural cocoa powder
½ cup light corn syrup
¼ cup fat-free half and half or fat-free evaporated milk
2 tablespoons trans fat-free margarine, such as Smart Balance
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Method: In a small saucepan, combine sugar, cocoa, corn syrup and half and half. Stir to blend. Cook over medium heat until mixture comes to a full boil, and then reduce heat to medium low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes. Remove sauce from heat and stir in margarine and vanilla, stirring until margarine melts. Cool, then store in the refrigerator. Makes about 1 cup. This sauce easily can be reheated in the microwave.

Recipe from King Arthur Flour. Per 1 tablespoon: 70 calories, 16 gm carbs, 1.5 gm fat, 0 gm sat. fat, 25 mg. sodium, 0 fiber, 0 protein.

Homemade Chocolate Angel Food Cake

So much more tender and delicious than one made from a mix! Using the Just Whites makes it easy, with no leftover yolks. This is wonderful all by itself, but if you want to dress it up, you can serve with fresh or frozen strawberries, a dab of whipped cream, or a scoop of frozen yogurt and some chocolate sauce. (See my recipe for low-fat chocolate sauce.)

1 ½ cups egg whites (I used dried egg whites, ½ cup plus 1 ½ cups warm water as directed on the container)
1 and ½ cups sifted powdered sugar
1 cup sifted cake flour
¼ cup natural cocoa powder, unsweetened
1 and ½ teaspoons cream of tartar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup granulated sugar

Method: In an extra large mixing bowl, or the bowl from a stand mixer, allow egg whites to stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Sift powdered sugar, flour and cocoa together 3 times and set aside.

Adjust oven baking rack to lowest position in the oven and then preheat to 350 degrees. F.

Add cream of tartar and vanilla to egg whites. Beat on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar, about 2 tablespoons at a time, beating until stiff peaks form. Set mixer aside. Sift about ¼ of the flour mixture over the beaten egg whites, and fold in just until blended. Repeat 3 more times, using ¼ of the flour mixture each time. Pour into an ungreased 10-inch tube pan. Gently cut through the batter with a table knife to remove any large air pockets. Bake on the lowest rack for about 40-45 minutes, until the top springs back when lightly touched and cracks in the top appear dry. Immediately invert cake using a rack or empty bottle to hold it up from the counter top. Let cake cool thoroughly before removing from pan. Makes 12 servings: Nutrition info. per serving is 161 calories, 0 gm fat, 51 mg sodium, 36 gm carbs, 0 gm fiber, and 4 gm protein. Recipe from Better Homes and Gardens.