

Some Basics for Healthier Holiday Desserts- the desserts and you, the maker.

- Plan your menu
- Be prepared to swap menu items due to availability and cost.
- At Rouxbe Mise en Place is key no matter the dish you are making.
 - Gather your ingredients and prep them as needed.
 - Once you start doing this, you'll never stop.
- Think in terms of components and make a Game Plan.
- Always do a test of your' variation by making a very small version of your 'idea for changing up a tried-and-true recipe. That is your recipe or a reliable or professional.
- Allow enough time for preheating the oven, soaking fruit, nuts, resting, setting, chilling.
- Coconut butter and coconut oil set non-baked desserts. You find these ingredients in many nut and date-based pie doughs and fillings.
 - They can be removed from some recipes, just remember to serve the desserts straight from the freezer.
- Making smaller versions means portion control and faster setting components.
- Any crumbs - cake, cookie, nut, oat, seed can be made to stick together with some fruit paste:
 - Add just enough to make a sticky but not wet mixture.
 - Freeze or bake until dry.
 - Date
 - Prune
 - Apricot
- There will be textural differences when you remove fat from batter- based desserts.
- Measure carefully.
- Use just enough sweetener to make a dessert a dessert.
- Choose the right sweetener.
- Use high percentage chocolate.
- Serve your desserts on smaller plates, garnished appropriately and attractively.
- Eat joyfully with gratitude.

Fran Costigan's Vegan Pumpkin Pie

Here is a vegan pumpkin pie with a difference, It's both dense and creamy, and spiced just right, although it is made without cream or eggs. Silken tofu replaces the eggs and cream and adds protein too. No one will know it is in the filling unless you tell.

Serves: 8-10

Recipe Notes:

At Rouxbe, *Mise en Place* is key. Gather your ingredients and prep them as needed.

Pie Dough: Use your favorite one, fitted 9-inch pie pan and keep it refrigerated, up to 8 hours, while you make the filling. We teach a liquid-fat based pie dough in Essential Vegan Desserts.

Candied Nuts Make the nuts up to - days ahead, store in a tightly covered jar.

The Pie: Allow time for the pie to firm in the refrigerator. Slice cold, serve at room temperature.

Lower fat version Skip the bottom crust. Bake the filling in parchment-lined or nonstick tart pans.

Serve topped with nuts, candied or plain, a small dollop of your favorite cream (coconut, cashew, aquafaba meringue). I like this pie with a ginger cream, tofu or cashew. Ginger adds digestion.

Ingredients: Filling

- 1 12.5-ounce tetra box of firm silken tofu (Mori Nu or Morenga)
- 2 cups pumpkin puree or 1 (15-ounce) can organic pumpkin puree
- 1/4 cup dark whole cane sugar (Sucanat) or use coconut sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup, grade A dark or dark amber, divided
- 1 tablespoon arrowroot
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Ingredients: Candied Pecans

- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup, grade A dark, or dark amber
- 2 teaspoons molasses, barley malt, sorghum, date syrup or coconut nectar
- 1 1/2 cups raw pecan halves
- 2 tablespoons dark whole cane sugar (Sucanat) or coconut sugar

Make the Pie

- Position a rack in the lowest section of the oven and another rack in the middle and preheat to 375 degrees.
- Tip the water out of the box of tofu. Add tofu and pumpkin to a food processor, process until creamy.
- Clean the sides of the processor bowl with a spatula. Add the sugar, spices, salt, 2 tablespoons of the maple syrup and the vanilla. Process a minute until thoroughly mixed.
- Combine the arrowroot and remaining 2 tablespoons of maple syrup in a small bowl. Stir with a fork until the arrowroot is dissolved. Add to pumpkin mixture and process about a minute.
- Bake the pie: Remove the pie dough (fitted into the pan) from the refrigerator and place the pie pan on a sheet pan. Pour the filling into the crust.
- Bake on the lower rack for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees. Move the pie to the upper rack and bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until the filling looks darker and has a sheen. The filling will have cracked, and the center jiggles slightly when the pie is moved. A knife inserted into a crack near the center will come out almost clean and feel hot. The filling will firm as the pie cools.
- Cool the pie to room temperature on a footed wire rack. Cover with parchment paper and refrigerate for 5 to 6 hours.

Make the Candied Pecans

- Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Mix the maple syrup and molasses in a medium bowl. Add the pecans and toss until well coated. Spread the pecans on the prepared sheet in an even layer and bake for 10 minutes.
- Remove from the oven and sprinkle with the dark whole cane or coconut sugar. Bake 4 minutes and stir. Bake 3 or 4 minutes longer, until the sugar is melted and bubbling.
- Set the baking sheet on a rack and allow the nuts to cool to room temperature. Store the nuts until they are needed for the pie, in a tightly covered container, at room temperature. They can be made 2 to 3 days ahead.

Assemble and Serve

Remove the pie from the refrigerator an hour ahead of serving to allow it to return to room temperature. When you are ready to serve the pie, or up to 15 minutes before serving, place the nuts decoratively on top, as many or as few as you like. Or serve the pie without nuts and pass a bowl of nuts.

DIY Pumpkin Pie Spice

You can look at jars to see the basic ingredients and adjust to your taste.

The beauty of making your own is that you control the flavor and additives.

I am not a big fan of clove—go figure. The kind of cinnamon matters, so less maybe more.

Use 1:1 for any recipe calling for pumpkin pie spice.

This is the one I keep on hand.

Make sure your spices are fresh. Do the sniff test.

Ingredients

3 tbsp (21g) ground cinnamon See note

2 tsp (5g) ground ginger

1 1/2 tsp (4g) ground nutmeg, do use freshly grated

3/4 to 1 tsp (2-3g) ground cloves

1 tsp (2g) ground allspice or use more cinnamon, nutmeg, additional pinch of clove

Method

- Whisk all the ingredients together in a small bowl to ensure there are no clumps.
- Pour spice mixture into your desired jar, one with a tight seal. A small funnel is handy.

Store at room temperature in a cupboard, drawer, or pantry.