

MOUTHWATERING DESSERTS YOUR BODY WILL LOVE

Desserts to live for

VEGAN
PLANT-BASED
FRUIT-SWEETENED



Talia Fuhrman

TALIA FUHRMAN

*Desserts
to live for*



Gift of Health Press



DESSERTS TO LIVE FOR

BY TALIA FUHRMAN

FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, USING THIS BOOK AS YOUR
TOOL, YOU CAN “EAT YOUR CAKE” AND STAY HEALTHY TOO.

ENJOY GOOD HEALTH

If you, like me, possess a sweet tooth as large as your savory tooth, you can enjoy heavenly desserts with zero guilt, zero sacrifice and zero risk of bodily harm when the desserts you eat are made with only good-for-you ingredients. For the rest of your life, using this book as your tool, you can “eat your cake” and stay healthy too. Unlike most dessert recipes, every recipe in this unique, health-promoting book is sweetened with nothing but fruit and dried fruit! That means “the fruit and nothing but the fruit.”

All harmful ingredients in conventional desserts, such as sugar, and other concentrated sweeteners, refined flour, butter, oil, dairy-based creams and artificial anything are excluded from these tasty recipes! Looking for gluten-free sweets? You will find a plethora of options here! Get ready to begin a revolutionary culinary journey that will protect your health while guaranteed to increase your nutritional knowledge and improve your skills in the kitchen. You will find a large variety of recipes from cookies, brownies and blondies to beautiful cakes, pies and ice creams within these pages.

SWEET TO THE CORE

First, let’s take a knowledge dive into why processed sugar, sweeteners and other ingredients commonly used in desserts are so bad for us. This knowledge is extremely important as the average American consumes 150-170 pounds of sugar a year. Knowing the science will help you choose healthier desserts forever—especially when you discover how delicious they can taste.

Sugar is more dangerous than we thought in the past, as are many commonly used so-called “healthier” sugar replacements, such as maple syrup, agave nectar, honey and coconut sugar.

Sweeteners commonly viewed as “healthy” alternatives are processed the same way in the body as sugar and can cause the same serious health problems sugar does!

COMPOSITION OF SWEETENERS

All of these sweeteners are rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream and significantly contribute to the development of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Despite their reputation as healthier alternatives to table sugar, natural sweeteners like agave nectar, honey and maple syrup are just as addictive and they do the same harm because they flood the bloodstream with glucose or fructose! The reality is that all concentrated sweeteners add substantial sugar calories to the diet while contributing very little nutritional value.

It is a common assumption that maple syrup is a healthier alternative to table sugar, but it contains 96 percent sucrose, so it is compositionally very similar to sugar. Coconut sugar contains 70-80 percent sucrose, and honey contains about 50 percent fructose and 45 percent glucose. Sucrose is half fructose and half glucose. It's composed of one fructose molecule linked to one glucose molecule. Agave nectar is about 80 percent fructose; it is almost the same as high-fructose corn syrup. All of these sweeteners promote weight gain and fat storage on the body.

The general rule is that all high-calorie, low-nutrient sweeteners have approximately the same effects on the body regardless of the ratio of glucose to fructose or what type of plant they come from. There is nothing innocent about it. No matter how good those sugar-loaded desserts look or taste, they can slowly kill us with a life-shortening disease if we consume them on a regular basis throughout our lives.

HONEY

Just like sugar, the nutrients in honey are insignificant. Add this to the fact that honey is highly concentrated fructose and glucose and that puts additional stress on the body, especially our liver and kidneys. There are 64 calories in one tablespoon of honey and all of these calories are in the form of concentrated sugar. Websites on the Internet claim that honey is nutritious and contains antioxidants and minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium and zinc; however, the reality is that the quantity of these nutrients in honey is insignificant (practically nil) compared to the quantity in real fruits and vegetables.

Upon researching the vitamin and mineral content in a serving of honey, it becomes obvious that claims asserting that honey is high in these minerals and vitamins like B6, thiamin, niacin and riboflavin are false. Honey, whether raw or cooked, is almost all sugar and no fiber. Fiber slows down the rate of carbohydrate absorption from the small intestine, delaying the after-meal flow of glucose into the blood.

Without fiber, glucose is absorbed rapidly. A surge of glucose into the bloodstream at a rapid rate leads to an insulin spike. The more insulin spikes we have, the greater our likelihood of developing type II diabetes, heart attacks and its associated cardiovascular problems as well as breast, colon and prostate cancer. Excessive insulin also increases fat storage and the risk of cancer.

AGAVE NECTAR

Agave nectar, or agave syrup, is used widely as a sweetener in so-called healthy food products from breakfast bars to cereals to vegan ice creams. It has become the sweetener used by health-conscious folks who want to avoid sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, and artificial sweeteners. There is enthusiasm about it for having a seemingly low glycemic index, which would make it a friendly sugar substitute for those with diabetes.

Unfortunately, these enthusiasts are misguided. What agave nectar does have is a lot of fructose. Actually, it has more fructose than high-fructose corn syrup! It's refined and processed just like high-fructose corn syrup. Agave nectar is between 55-97 percent fructose, depending on the brand, while high-fructose corn syrup averages 55 percent fructose. Pretty shocking, right?

To be fair, before processing and refinement, agave nectar was once in a natural form, albeit a high-in-fructose natural form. Before manufacturing and standard practices of refinement, true agave nectar comes from the Blue Agaves (also known as tequila agave plants) that thrive in the volcanic soils of Southern Mexico. However, the agave nectar we buy in stores is a far cry from the agave nectar that comes from the natural plant. Most "agave" is nothing more than a laboratory-generated, highly-compacted fructose syrup.

Although processing methods may vary among manufacturers, commercially available agave is converted into a fructose-rich syrup using genetically modified enzymes and a chemically intensive process employing the use of caustic acids, clarifiers, and filtration chemicals.

After all of this processing, agave nectar generally contains upwards of 80 percent fructose, completely wreaking havoc on our health, our skin quality, and if we eat it often enough, our weight. Fructose may even be worse than glucose because it doesn't just increase insulin levels, it increases our insulin resistance, which increases the likelihood of type 2 diabetes. Our bodies metabolize fructose in the liver in the same manner in which we metabolize alcohol. Just as excess alcohol inclines us to developing a fat "beer belly," excess fructose makes us prone to developing a fat "fructose belly."

Every time you imagine sinking your teeth into a cupcake sweetened with agave, think "fructose belly." That should get you to put that cupcake down.

MAPLE SYRUP

Maple syrup is similar to honey and agave nectar because it is just concentrated sugar calories and low in nutrients and fiber too. Continual exposure to low-nutrient, low-fiber, high-calorie sweeteners dulls our taste buds to the natural sweet taste of whole fruits. If your aim is to stay at a healthy weight and not get a life-threatening disease cutting your

life short, these liquid sweeteners are best avoided. Just like pure sugar, maple syrup is also linked to increased risks of weight gain, diabetes, heart disease and cancers, because it is sugar.

WHY SHARP MINDS AND SUGAR DON'T MIX

In life, no brain, no gain! So of course, we want our brain to be as sharp as possible. Understanding how chronic sugar consumption leads to both short-term and long-term decreased mental functioning is critically important. The effects are striking!

Sugar travels through the blood-brain barrier quickly and wreaks havoc with brain cells.

Blood vessels all over our bodies become inflamed when we consume too much sugar, and this includes the blood vessels in our brains which leads to a progressive decline in brain function.^{1,2}

Deficits in learning, memory, motor speed and other cognitive functions have been found in studies on those who have diabetes.³ However, even for those without diabetes, greater sugar consumption is associated with similar damage, demonstrated by lower scores on tests of cognitive function, reduction in memory and attention, and higher risk of dementia with aging. It is not only the heightened blood sugar, but also its effect to raise insulin resistance. Higher consumption of commercial baked goods containing white flour and sugar also raises blood pressure and cholesterol.^{4,5}

SUGAR ADDICTION IS REAL

Not only can sugar make us depressed and harm our cognitive capacities, but it can be as addictive as drugs.⁶ Sweets are associated with bingeing, craving, withdrawal symptoms, and sensitization of the same brain pathway as addiction to amphetamines, narcotics and alcohol. For many, sugar addiction could be an even harder habit to break, because the damage is so gradual, insidious and widespread that people don't recognize its harm.

White flour is essentially the same as sugar as it is converted into sugar during digestion and absorbed as sugar into the blood stream. The same harm also occurs when we consume other sweetening agents such as maple syrup, honey, agave nectar and coconut sugar, our dopamine receptors begin to down-regulate, leading to fewer receptors for the dopamine to latch onto.

Every single time we consume foods with large amounts of free sugar (sugar missing its fiber) our dopamine receptors become further desensitized and then greater amounts of sugar are required to produce the same stimulatory effects. This is typical of what happens with any addiction, from heroin to cigarettes. More junk food is necessary over time to achieve the same level of reward. People who are more susceptible to forming addictions are at a greater risk of developing a sugar addiction and losing control over calories, just as they are at a greater risk of alcohol and drug addiction. It is a serious problem for millions of Americans.

MORE SUGAR AND MORE HEART ATTACKS AND CANCERS

According to the epic 2014 JAMA Internal Medicine study, which followed over 40,000 people for 15 years, the link between sugar and heart disease holds true even for people at healthy weights and regardless of age, gender and physical activity level.⁷ Participants who consumed 25 percent or more calories each day from processed sugar were more than twice as likely to die from heart disease than those whose diets included less than 10 percent added sugar.

This includes the agave nectar, maple syrup, honey and coconut sugar you see in “healthy” desserts at the vegan restaurants and in health food stores across the country. What’s striking about the study is that how many fruits and veggies participants ate was irrelevant! “Regardless of their Healthy Eating Index scores, people who ate more processed sugar still had higher cardiovascular mortality,” reported Dr. Teresa Fung, adjunct professor of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health. Previous studies have demonstrated that excess sugar can raise blood pressure and stimulate the liver to dump more harmful fats into the bloodstream. It’s disturbing that we’ve known that the majority of human cancers are preventable via diet and nutrition since the 1960s when the World Health Organization began examining diet and lifestyle factors and came to these conclusions. Data since then has come to the same verdicts and even more compelling evidence continues to mount that high-sugar, high-meat, low-fiber and low-nutrient diets, the very diets of most Americans are what leads to the majority of cancer cases in the United States.

Every major scientific health organization in the United States, including the National Cancer Society, the American Cancer Society, and the Department of Health and Human Services, supports research findings that diet and cancer are intertwined and these organizations have presented dietary suggestions for the public in hopes of engendering greater awareness.

When sugar combines with other low-nutrient, low-fiber foods in our environment, like white flour and oils, the very ingredients found in most dessert recipes, we have essentially created a cancer cake. Those sweets and treats everywhere from Starbucks to supermarkets are actually the perfect formula for cancer and heart disease to develop later in life.

WHY PROCESSED SUGARY SWEETS, WHITE FLOUR AND CHILDREN SHOULD NOT MEET

Exposure to negative and toxic influences when we are young has the greatest influence on whether or not we will get cancer or heart disease as older adults. Here’s the lowdown on why.

“In adults, our valuable genetic material (DNA) is wound up in a tight ball, like the rubber bands on the inside of a golf ball. When we are young and cells are replicating

and growing, the DNA unwinds, exposing more of its surface. This makes it more susceptible to damage from toxic exposure. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, infants and toddlers have a ten times greater cancer risk than adults when exposed to gene-damaging chemicals. In a similar manner, an unhealthy diet can do substantially more damage to a young body than to an adult one. The earlier in life, the greater the potential for damage.” ~ Joel Fuhrman M.D., *Disease-Proof Your Child*, page 79

Breast cancer is associated with a high body weight and now we also know that white flour, sugar and too much animal product consumption are all associated with breast cancer, too. Interestingly though is that body weight during the twenty years prior to the time we receive a cancer diagnosis is not as dangerous as being overweight as a child or teenager.

This isn't to say that gaining weight at later stages of life is not harmful, but it does mean that childhood and teenage exposure to toxins, sweetened desserts and junk food plays a more critical role in whether or not cancer will happen in our 60s, 70s, 80s and beyond. Cancer in the body is established over a period of decades.⁸

Ironically, it's usually in our younger years that we take our health for granted and don't care as much about the effects, for better or worse, of what we eat. Sugar and its syrupy sweetener cousins are unquestionably dangerous when consumed as youngsters when more of the surface of our DNA is exposed. Studies conducted on animals have confirmed this same principle, that eating nutritiously early in life plays a more critical role in whether or not we end up with a chronic, painful or deadly disease decades down the road.⁹

KIDS LOVE HEALTHY FOOD

I'm sure you'll find that the desserts in this book are amazingly delicious. There is an abundance of recipes to choose from, so you can experiment and find your own favorites and kids can find their own favorites too. Desserts sweetened with fruit can taste sensational and this book is a testament to that.

We have a tremendous advantage in that we were designed to love the taste of natural foods. This is especially true for kids. Our genes are engineered to like fruits without any trickery, forcing or coaxing. We didn't possess the plethora of junk foods surrounding us when we were evolving. Our taste buds haven't changed even a little bit in thousands of years. Not only do kids love the taste of natural plant foods, but if fed properly they will learn to reject the overpowering tastes of junk foods all on their own. I am a testament of this principle myself.

Growing up, I watched my dad lecture children in my classes, at his office and in health conferences around the country. I saw how my peers reacted to what he taught about nutrition; they were always curious, intrigued and eager to eat healthfully. When provided with accurate information, they loved soaking it up like sponges,

ready for more answers. They wished to know what I knew and wanted their parents to feed them the foods my parents fed me. I've noticed that kids are often the most excited to eat healthfully out of any age group! Growing up, my friends didn't assume that junk foods were more delicious like many of the adults I speak with today do. The difference in attitudes between children and adults raised on the standard American diet can be striking. Children are often better at rejecting junk foods than adults. All of my younger siblings are testaments of these words too.

My siblings and I were raised in the same home in the same town with the same ubiquity of junk foods outside of the house, at school and our friends' houses. My parents used the same strategy to raise all four of us. All of my siblings and I love the Nutritarian (nutrient-dense, plant-rich) lifestyle we grew up on and we will be sticking to it for the rest of our lives. We all tried junk foods too; my parents didn't control how we ate at friends' homes. They taught us the importance of eating healthy foods, but respected us enough to let us make our own choices outside of our home. We got to know what conventional foods tasted like, desserts and all and we all felt the same way ~ grateful for the healthy foods we were brought up on and wholeheartedly prefer them.

WHY WHOLE FRUITS ARE SUPERIOR

What makes whole fruits different than extracted sweeteners is that they are packed with fiber to regulate the entrance of glucose, fructose and sucrose into our bodies, and they are loaded with phytonutrients and polyphenols to buffer the effects of the natural sugars inside the fruit. Furthermore, the fructose and glucose threshold is much lower in fruits. Fruit only contains a few grams of fructose per serving and do not expose us to enough fructose to trigger fat storage, unless we consume an overabundance of fruit juice or dried fruit.

DATES ARE THE CHOSEN ONE

My main sweetener of choice in this book is dates. You too will fall in love with dates as there are magical qualities in dates that make them the perfect sweetener for healthy, anti-cancer, heart disease-fighting dessert recipes! Dates are unique for quite a few reasons. They are particularly sweet for their small size.

Wouldn't such a high-sugar food raise blood sugar and triglycerides, increase oxidative stress on our bodies and incline us to gain weight? Not at all. Dates also happen to be loaded with fiber and phytonutrients and this makes all the difference in the world. Just like other whole fruits jam-packed with fiber and phytochemicals, the nutrients and fiber in dates buffer the effects of those natural sugars.

There are no documented adverse effects of consuming a reasonable amount of dates on blood sugar or weight. Quite the contrary, studies show beneficial improvements in triglycerides and antioxidant levels upon consuming dates regularly!¹⁰

IMPORTANT DATE NUTRITION FACTS :

- 1) Dates are packed with polyphenols, and in particular, a type of polyphenol called tannins.¹¹ Polyphenols are a class of antioxidants with incredible health-protecting properties.
- 2) The fiber content of dates is between 6.4-11.5% depending on the variety and degree of ripeness. Fiber is known for its ability to lower cholesterol and fight obesity, heart disease and colorectal cancer. The primary fiber in dates is insoluble fiber, which binds to fat and cholesterol and carries it out of the body.
- 3) There are at least 15 minerals in dates in significant quantities, including potassium, boron, calcium, cobalt, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorous and zinc. Selenium is another element found in dates, which has been found to prevent cancer and increase immune system strength.
- 4) Dates contain protein: 23 different amino acids, many of which are not present in more popular fruits like oranges, apples and bananas.
- 5) Dates contain important vitamins including vitamin C, thiamine (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), niacin (vitamin B3), vitamin K and vitamin A. The B vitamins help with the metabolism of food and the formation of new blood cells.

Remember that it is the high-fiber and high-micronutrient content of fruits that helps protect us against cancer and heart disease.

A TRICK I USE IN BAKING WITH DATES

Usually the dates I purchase are soft and ready for using in any recipe within these pages. However, some dates can firm up over time and if they've been in storage for a little while, they remain perfect for baking but may need some softening. To soften dates, pit them with a sharp knife and soak them in water overnight.

WHY ALL RECIPES CAN BE PREPARED OIL-FREE

Guess what food ingredient has almost no micronutrients whatsoever? Oils. Every type of oil! That's right, even olive oil and coconut oil have no notable levels of vitamins, minerals or phytochemicals. Not only are oils devoid of nutrients, they are loaded with calories. Every single type of oil on this planet has 120 calories per tablespoon, all of which come from fat. When you consume oil, it is absorbed rapidly and your body can store this type of fat effortlessly in your hips and belly in about 10 minutes. Eating oil is pretty much the reverse of liposuction, yet most of us use it as a major ingredient or cook with it on a daily basis. The average American currently consumes 300 to 500

calories from added oil every single day. This adds up to over 100,000 extra calories each year! Here's another equation:

**AN EXTRA 100 CALORIES FROM OIL EACH DAY =
100 EXTRA POUNDS OF FAT IN 10 YEARS**

It's not a huge deal to eat a bit of oil here and there if you eat an overall healthy diet and are physically active and slim, but this is not the case for most people. As many Americans continue to become overweight or obese, consuming extra calories from oil leads to additional health problems. This is not simply a matter of fitting into your skinny jeans—at the rate we eat oil, we're facing heightened risks of diabetes, cancer, or heart attacks: for every 200 calories of any food consumed beyond your basic needs each day, your long-term risk of cancer increases by 20 percent.¹²

Oils are processed foods—there are no oil trees! Oils are generally extracted from plants with a petroleum chemical such as hexane. When you chemically extract oil from a whole plant food (like olives, nuts, or seeds), you remove desirable nutrients and fibers and obtain a fragmented food that contains little more than empty calories.

Of course, we all need to eat fat. No question. However, when we eat fat in the form of whole foods, like walnuts, sesame seeds, or flaxseeds, instead of their extracted oils, we get a beautiful, health-promoting symphony of nutrients along with the fat; that includes fiber, flavonoids, isoflavones, and other disease-fighting warriors. When you eat fat in the form of whole foods, you consume fewer calories and get a valuable supply of nutrients. Seeds contain folate, iron, calcium, niacin, lignans, and flavonoids; the oils from seeds contain almost none of these nutrients. Additionally, the fibers in the nuts and seeds bind fat and pull fat calories out of you into the toilet, so all the calories eaten are not absorbed.

C O C O N U T B U T T E R V S . C O C O N U T O I L

Coconut oil has received a lot of attention in the media for its health properties, but don't be fooled by the non-scientifically validated hype. Remember, all oils, including coconut oil are very high in calories and contain insignificant nutrients. Coconut butter is different. Coconut oil is processed and is only the fat of the natural coconut. In contrast, coconut butter retains much of the fiber, vitamins, minerals and micronutrients present in the original whole coconut.

The consistency of coconut butter is similar to most other nut butters in that it is thick, creamy and rich. Where it differs is when it is chilled. When stored in the refrigerator, it hardens completely. I recommend storing it in the cabinet. It's perfect for making raw, no-bake desserts and fillings harden without having to resort to oils. You can make your own coconut butter by processing shredded coconut in a food processor until you have a smooth butter or you can purchase coconut butter online or in most health food stores.

PROCESSED FLOURS AND OUR HEALTH

There is a very good reason why you will not find white flour in any of the recipes within this book. Refined carbohydrates like white flour are missing the fiber and nutrients from the original grain, so they raise blood glucose higher and faster than their intact, unprocessed counterparts. The glycemic load of white bread is 75 compared to 51 for whole-wheat bread (this is on a scale of 0-100). Foods low on the glycemic index (GI) scale tend to release glucose slowly and steadily. Foods high on the glycemic index release glucose rapidly. The slow and steady release of glucose in low-glycemic foods is helpful in keeping blood glucose under control.

White flour enters the bloodstream as simple sugar and just like other forms of sugar it promotes unhealthy weight gain and increases your risk of developing heart disease. In an eight-year Italian study that followed the glycemic load of the diets of women, the women with the highest intake of high-glycemic foods were more than twice as likely to develop heart disease, an increased risk of 124 percent.¹³ In another six-year study of 65,000 women, those with diets high in refined carbohydrates from white bread, white rice, and pasta were 2.5 times as likely to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes compared to those who ate lower-GL foods such as intact whole grains and whole-wheat bread.¹⁴ White bread also leads to an increased risk of cancer.¹⁵

A study involving over 500 women at Tufts University examined the diets of each participant, determining which type of food was the most prominent in each woman's daily caloric intake: healthy food, white bread, alcohol, sweets, or meat and potatoes. Astonishingly, the diet style which produced the largest increase in the size of the participants' waist measurements was white bread.¹⁶ Shocking!

Combining nutrient-void, high-glycemic sweeteners in dessert recipes along with white flour is essentially a recipe for later-life disease disaster. I often see delicious looking "healthy" recipes include a combination of ingredients such as "coconut oil, coconut sugar, maple syrup and flour," which are actually the perfect combination of ingredients to give a person serious health problems later in life and a premature death.

White bread is white because it's been chemically bleached, just like you bleach your clothes. This means that when you eat white bread, you are also eating residual chemical bleach. Flour mills use different chemical bleaches and chemicals like oxide of nitrogen, chlorine, chloride, nitrosyl, and benzoyl peroxide mixed with chemical salts. When the wheat germ and bran are removed from the grain and only the endosperm is left (which occurs in the making of white flour products), all vitamin E and roughly 50 percent of calcium, 70 percent of phosphorus, 80 percent of iron, 98 percent of magnesium, 75 percent of manganese, 80 percent of thiamin, 75 percent of niacin, and countless more nutrients are lost. When we eat such low-nutrient foods, we are torturing our cells and robbing them of the nutrients they require to perform basic functions and to repair themselves from damage.

FLAXSEED AND CHIA SEED “EGGS” ARE THE PERFECT EGG SUBSTITUTE IN BAKING

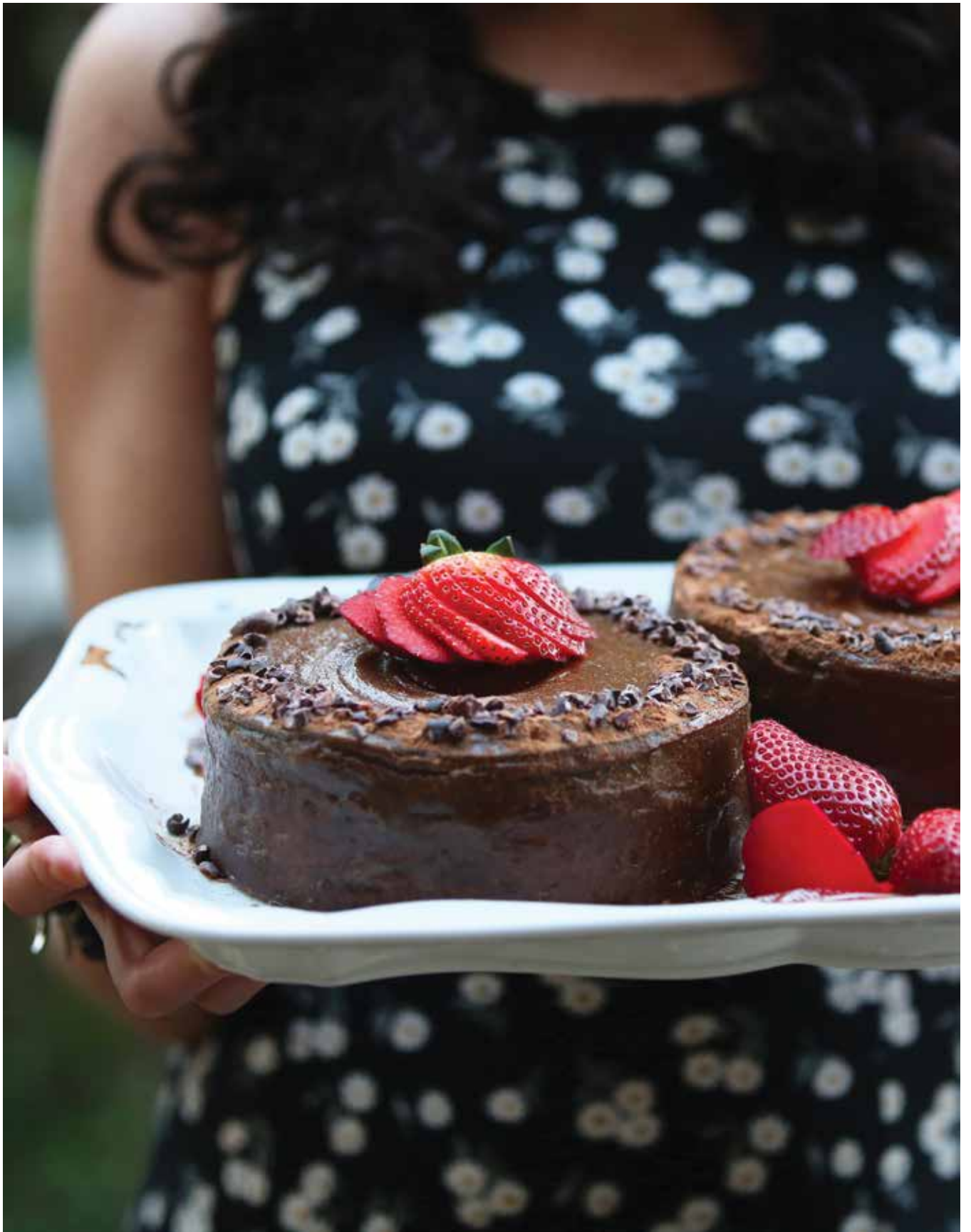
The majority of recipes within these pages include flax “eggs.” I like to use ground flaxseeds more than ground chia seeds, but this is a personal preference. Both seeds, when ground up and mixed with the right amount of liquid, form a gel-like consistency, which resembles the consistency of eggs. In the world of vegan baking, flax “eggs” and chia “eggs” are ideal egg substitutes. Either water or non-dairy milk can be mixed with the ground seeds.

To make one flax or chia “egg,” mix 1 tablespoon of ground flaxseeds or chia seeds with 3 tablespoons water or non-dairy milk. To make two “eggs,” mix 2 heaping tablespoons with ½ cup non-dairy milk or water. Most of my recipes use two “eggs.” You will want to stir the ground flaxseeds or chia seeds with the liquid in a cup or small bowl and let sit for at least five minutes before using. These “eggs” work wonderfully for breads, muffins, brownies, cookies, cakes and more!

GROUND VANILLA VS. VANILLA EXTRACT

If there is anything I have learned of substance about nutrition, it is unequivocal that the whole food contains more substance, aka nutrients, than any refined or processed version. In the culinary arts, the whole food generally contains more flavor as well. This is no different for vanilla! Ground vanilla bean is superior to vanilla extract both in terms of nutritional value and taste. If you’ve ever had a dish or treat made with raw vanilla bean powder versus an extract, you know there’s nothing out there like the real thing. The beans are sun-dried and cured which produces their flavor, then sold either in whole bean form, pre-scraped or powdered form, vanilla bean paste (often with added sugars which should be avoided) or soaked with alcohol or alcohol-free alternatives (like glycerin) to produce an extract or food flavoring. Because vanilla extract is processed and diluted, it cannot be counted on for ground vanilla’s micronutrients including unique phytonutrients and antioxidants.

Words for the wise: Watch out for fake vanilla! Vanillin is what you’ll find on labels of cheap extracts at your grocery store, also labeled “imitation vanilla.” Imitation vanilla may also be called “vanilla flavor,” and it’s frequently combined with sugar, corn syrup or a similar unhealthful, low-quality sweetener to make products taste better. Imitation vanilla is chemically produced in laboratories to mimic the taste of vanilla but is not actually, true vanilla. Real vanilla does cost a few extra dollars, but can be purchased affordably online. Also note, real vanilla has a deep, almost smoky, rich flavor that fake vanilla cannot replace. When purchasing vanilla bean powder, make sure that the origin is stated on the label and the only ingredients are ground vanilla beans, not sugar and other flavorings too.



SHARING AND ENJOYING RECIPES WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Most of the recipes within these pages make serving sizes large enough to share with friends and/or family. It's fun to see what people's reactions are when they aren't aware that what they are eating is actually good for them! Introducing the idea of healthy desserts to someone both interested in their own health and yours can inspire a person you care about to follow in your footsteps and support you in your efforts to be healthy. While the desserts inside these pages are pleasurable, they are even more pleasurable when you have friends and family to share them with. Maintaining positive habits is always easier and more enjoyable when the people in your life support and encourage you and vice versa.

Some of the recipes in this book accompany a poem as my imagination in creating these recipes instinctually made me want to create poems simultaneously and I had so much fun baking and writing together.

Imaginations are powerful things. As Albert Einstein said, "Logic will get you from A to B, but imagination will take you anywhere." My imagination says, "Delicious desserts call for delicious thoughts that make you feel inspired as you work."

Now that the science is behind us, it's time for deliciously creative fun in your kitchen. If you don't think you have a knack for baking or preparing desserts, try a few of the recipes and I am sure that will change forever. I hope you have as much pleasure making the recipes as I did!

Head to my website, Facebook and Instagram pages for an online community of like-minded health enthusiasts and health food foodies!

Website: www.taliafuhrman.com

To view the scientific references, visit: www.taliafuhrman.com/dessertstolivefor/references

Facebook: www.facebook.com/taliafuhrman

Instagram: @taliafuhrman & @taliastreats

HOW LONG WILL THESE RECIPES LAST?



Most of the recipes within these pages will last about a week if stored in the refrigerator and a couple of months if stored in the freezer. I love to cut breads and brownies into reasonable servings and freeze them, so I have a delicious treat ready for me to heat up and enjoy every day of the week! Usually a minute of warming in the microwave will do the trick.