

An Unlikely Culinary Column: Surviving the Summer Heat with Sweets

By Karen Kain

There were several days at the end of this summer when it was just too darn hot to bake, but it certainly didn't stop those sweet tooth cravings.

Recently I have come across a plethora of no bake cookie recipes and I thought during this summer heat would be the perfect time to try a few out.

While I was in California visiting my sister she shared with me her new evening treat, which turns out to be a pretty darn healthy no bake cookie recipe. These cookies are really easy to make, once you put them together you freeze them, storing in the freezer until you are ready to enjoy them. They are very dense which makes them filling and the cocoa powder is perfect for those of us who are in need of a chocolate fix.

One of my favorite things about these cookies is that they have a dusting of Himalayan sea salt on top; I love the sweet and savory combination, which just makes them a perfect snack.

I was not too sure my husband would like these healthy treats. He is a great sport about sampling everything I make, but not always a big fan of the ingredients. I don't always tell him when something is especially healthy or vegan and let him decide without a predisposed judgment, whether he likes it or not. I am happy to report that out of the batch I ate one and he ate the rest, which is saying a lot for my picky sweet-toothed mate.

If you love peanut butter you will love this second cookie recipe. You can make them with xylitol instead of

sugar if you have a sugar restriction. These are really yummy and are a big hit when made with or without the sugar.

And lastly if you have a sweet tooth, love oats and peanut butter, this No Bake Chocolate Toffee Cookie recipe is for you. On my first attempt I had a bit of a fail making this recipe. I had to tweak the ingredients quite a bit to get the consistency that I was looking for. I kept taste testing and adding butter until I came up with a tasty brown no bake cookie that was a nice treat. I realize that in my adding more butter and chocolate they are not as healthy, but definitely worth the effort.

I realize that school will be starting soon and at some point things will cool down. I hope you are all enjoying your end of summer and look forward to hearing about what you are cooking up in the kitchen.

No Bake Coconut Cookies

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ Cups oats
- 1 Cup coconut flakes
- ¾ Cup honey
- ½ Cup coconut oil
- 1 Cup almond butter
- 1 Tablespoon flaxseeds
- 2 Teaspoons vanilla
- 6 Tablespoons cocoa powder



Directions:

Put the oats and coconut flakes into a blender or food processor and blend until fine then set aside. In a saucepan melt the honey, coconut oil and

almond butter until smooth then remove from heat and add to the oat mixture. Add the flaxseeds, vanilla, cocoa powder and stir to fully combine. Using a large spoon drop the batter onto a cookie sheet then sprinkle with coconut sugar and a dash of Himalayan pink salt. Freeze for at least 20 minutes, then store in an airtight container taking out of the freezer when you are ready to eat them. I would take into consideration that these cookies are very filling when you are spooning them onto a cookie sheet.

No Bake Oatmeal Peanut Butter Chocolate Cookies

Yield 34 small or 24 medium

Ingredients:

- 1 Stick (unsalted) butter (or ¼ cup butter with ¼ cup oil)
- ½ Cup milk
- ½ Cup peanut butter
- 1 ½ to 2 cups sugar (or 1 scant cup xylitol)
- 4 Tablespoons cocoa powder
- 3 Cups rolled oats
- 1 Teaspoon vanilla

Directions:

In a stainless steel skillet soften the butter. Add the milk and remaining ingredients then cook over low heat until very hot, stirring frequently. Prepare a cookie sheet with parchment or waxed paper then drop the batter in spoonfuls onto the paper. Chill in the refrigerator until firm then transfer to a cookie tin and store in the refrigerator.

No Bake Oatmeal Chocolate Toffee Cookies

Ingredients:

- 3 Cups quick-cooking oats
- 1 Cup peanut butter or almond butter
- 1 ½ Cup semisweet chocolate chips
- ¾ Cup toffee bits, plus more for sprinkling
- 1 Stick softened unsalted butter
- ½ Teaspoon kosher salt

Directions:

Line a baking sheet with wax paper. Combine the oats, peanut butter, chocolate chips, toffee bits, butter and salt in a large skillet. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the chocolate chips melt, about 3 to 5 minutes. Scoop heaping tablespoons of batter onto the baking sheet and sprinkle each cookie with extra toffee bits. Freeze for 15 minutes before serving. The cookies can be stored in the refrigerator in an air-tight container for 1 week.

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