

Turkmenistan marks 30th independence anniversary

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ministries and institutions demonstrating their achievements and Alabai shepherd dogs, which accompanied soldiers on military vehicles.

The nation of 6 million people prides itself in horses and dogs, honoring its centuries-old herding traditions.

Berdymukhamedov ordered a holiday praising the Alabai to be celebrated on the last Sunday of April when Turkmenistan also marks the day of the local horse breed, according to the newspaper *Neutral Turkmenistan*.

Last year, Berdymukhamedov inaugurated a nearly 50-foot gilded statue honoring the dog in the Turkmen capital.

Berdymukhamedov has ruled the gas-rich desert country since 2006 through an all-encompassing personality cult that styles him as Turkmenistan's "arkadaq," or protector.

U.S. hits 700,000 COVID deaths just as cases begin to fall

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prevent the virus from taking as many lives as it did last winter.

Still, the model predicts about 90,000 more Americans will die by January 1 for an overall death toll of 788,000 by that date. The model calculates that about half of those deaths could be averted if almost everyone wore masks in public.

"Mask wearing is already heading in the wrong direction," said Ali Mokdad, a professor of health metrics sciences at the university. "We need to make sure we are ready for winter because our hospitals are exhausted."

Johnson reported from Washington state. Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed from Washington, D.C.

Blueberries bring out sweet side of tahini

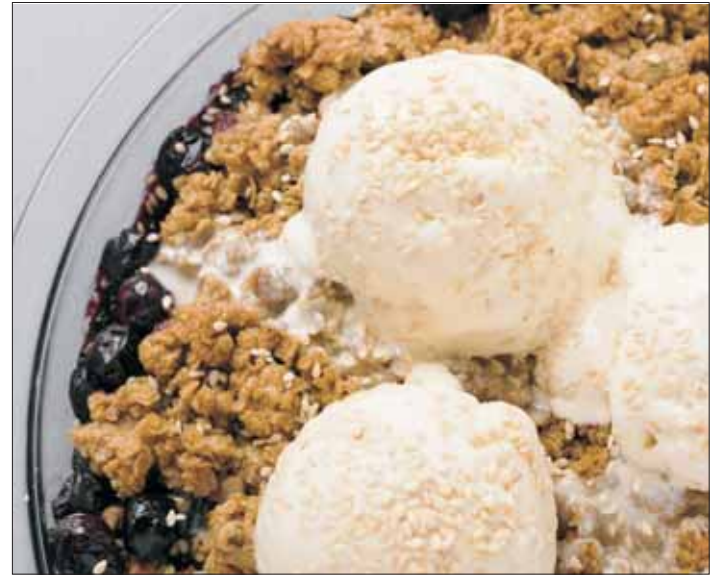
By Christopher Kimball
Christopher Kimball's Milk Street

The sesame paste known as tahini is becoming better known to American cooks, largely because of hummus, but also thanks to the nutty richness it lends to falafel, grilled meats, and roasted vegetables.

Cooks in the Middle East, however, know its savory, slightly bitter flavor works just as well in desserts. A prime example is halva, a fudge-like confection that is mostly sweetened tahini with spices, nuts, and dried fruit.

So at Milk Street, we knew tahini could update an American classic — the blueberry crumble. In this recipe from our book *COOKish*, which limits recipes to just six ingredients without sacrificing flavor, tahini boosts the flavor of a buttery oat mixture that bakes on top of juicy blueberries. The savory nuttiness of the tahini perfectly balances the sweet berries, which we also sprinkle with a bit of cinnamon.

Be sure to use quick-cooking oats; old-fashioned oats won't soften quite enough. Ripe fresh berries are best but frozen work, too. Look for frozen "wild" blueberries — they're tiny, but pack big flavor. If frozen regular berries are a must, add a few minutes to the baking time, but don't thaw them before use.



TAHINI TREAT. This image released by Milk Street shows a serving of Blueberry Crumble with Oats and Tahini. (Milk Street via AP)

This crumble is especially delicious warm, with a scoop of ice cream melting on top.

Editor's note: To view additional recipes, visit 177milkstreet.com/ap.

Blueberry Crumble with Oats and Tahini

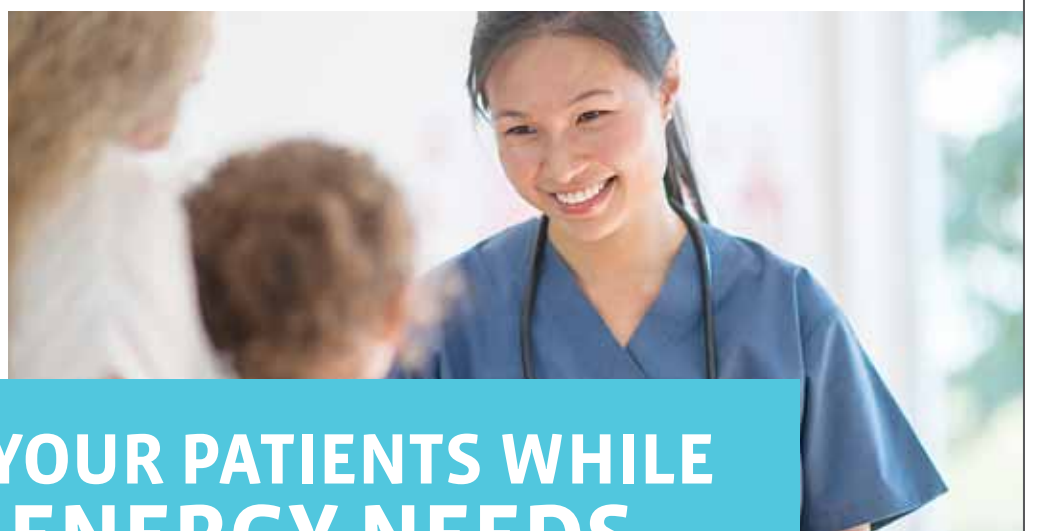
Start to finish: 45 minutes

Servings: 4 to 6

- 2 pints fresh blueberries or 4 cups frozen blueberries, preferably wild (see note)
- 2 cups (160 grams) quick-cooking oats, divided
- 3/4 cup (164 grams) packed brown sugar, divided
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) salted butter, cut into 8 pieces, room temperature
- 1/4 cup (64 grams) tahini
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

Heat the oven to 350° Fahrenheit. In a medium bowl, toss the blueberries with 1/4 cup (20 grams) of the oats and 1/4 cup (54 grams) of the sugar; transfer to a 9" pie plate. Wipe out the bowl, then add the remaining 1 3/4 cups (140 grams) oats, the remaining 1/2 cup (107 grams) sugar, the butter, tahini, cinnamon, and salt. Mix until evenly moistened, then use your hands to squeeze the mixture into rough olive-size clumps and scatter them over the berries. Bake until the edges are bubbling and the crumble is golden, 30 to 35 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Optional garnish: Toasted sesame seeds.



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