



Meditations and Holiday Foods for Winter Blahs: Science to Boost your Solstice Mood

Recipes and Meditations

Gathered and Edited by Reba Connell

Zucchini Carrot Fritters (could be Hanukah latkes)

Finding new ways to make eating zucchini sexy and fun again....Flavor-wise, these fritters actually remind me of Chinese scallion pancakes minus the doughy texture. They're savory and slightly sweet with a golden crispy surface. Just like I remember after school snacks in my home town. Before making the fritters, season the grated vegetables lightly with salt. It will help the vegetables "sweat" thus remove more water content. Before pan frying, try to squeeze out the liquid as much as possible or otherwise your fritters will be soaky and less apt to hold their shape. If you still find it difficult to hold the shape of the fritters in a frying pan without them falling apart, you can first form each fritter (about 3 tbsp per fritter) into meatball shape then gently press them down in your hands before pan frying. --ChihYu Smith

- 2 cups shredded/grated zucchini
- 2 cups shredded/grated carrots
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup slivered almond flour
- 3 large eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced scallions
- Avocado oil or coconut oil, to pan-fry
- Fine sea salt + black pepper

Instructions

1. Shred/grate zucchini and carrots.
2. Sprinkle lightly with salt. Set aside for 10 mins. (optional)
3. Use a cheese cloth or hand to squeeze out the liquid as much as you can. (optional)
4. Add eggs, almond flour, scallions, sea salt and black pepper. Stir the mixture until it's combined.
5. Scoop the mixture (about 3 tbsp per fritter) into the pan. Gently press them into round shape. Cook until they are golden brown. Transfer the fritters to a large plate lined with paper towel.

ChihYu [*chee-yu*] Smith, I HEART UMAMI



Thirteen desserts

I enjoyed this idea of the symbolic foods, which remind me of a Passover seder...plus, desserts that don't need to be cooked or prepared!

From Wikipedia

The thirteen desserts (*lei tretze dessèrts*) are the traditional dessert foods used in celebrating Christmas in the French region of Provence. The "big supper" (*le gros souper*) ends with a ritual 13 desserts, representing Jesus Christ and the 12 apostles. The desserts always number thirteen but the exact items vary by local or familial tradition.^[1] The food traditionally is set out Christmas Eve and remains on the table three days until December 27.^[2]

dried fruit and nuts

Four beggars

The first four of these are known as the "four beggars" (*les quatre mendiants*), representing the four mendicant monastic orders: Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinian and Carmelites.^[3]

- Raisins (Dominicans)
- Walnuts or hazelnuts^[4] (Augustines)
- Dried figs (Franciscans)
- Almonds (Carmelites)
- Dates, representing the foods of the region where Christ lived and died^[5]
- Dried plums from Brignoles

Fresh fruit

- Apples
- Pears
- Oranges
- Winter melon
- Grapes
- Tangerines

Sweets: Black Nougat



Black Nougat is the only traditional Provençal nougat, made with the honey and almonds from the farm, and it's considered essential for the *gros soupa* of Noël.

almonds

honey [*mie*]

orange flower water)

Prepare molds for the finished nougat: several shallow rectangular molds are often used; But a flat pan with parchment paper is ok, you just have to cut it (I think this means you would cut the nougat after it cools). Lightly oil the molds or pan and line them with the Parchment Paper.

1. The almonds should be whole and unpeeled, but if your molds are very small, breaking some will help them fit better.
2. Heat the honey slowly in a thick-bottomed pan, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon.
3. As soon as the honey starts to boil, throw in all the almonds and the orange-flower water, and keep stirring.
4. Timing - When the mixture begins to darken (some people put a drop of the honey in a bowl of cold water to see if it solidifies) stop cooking. The almonds should begin cracking at that time, but they don't always.
5. Pour the mixture into the molds, cover with a layer of parchment paper and a weighted board, and let cool.
6. Extract from the molds, cut and serve.

<http://www.afarian.com/myRecipes/2015/01/31/nougat-black/>



Mushroom Pâté

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 pound crimini mushrooms, sliced
2 medium onions, thinly sliced
Unrefined sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ cup walnuts (see note)

1. Sauté mushrooms and onions in oil, with a sprinkling of 1 teaspoon of salt, until the mushrooms shrink and the onions look limp. Let cool.
2. In a food processor, blend the mushrooms, onions, and walnuts until smooth, scraping down the sides of the food processor with a spatula mid-way. Add more salt if needed and plenty of black pepper. Serve cold or at room temperature, as a spread or dip.

Note #1: You may wish to soak the walnuts in water overnight, then drain them before using them in this recipe. This makes the walnuts more digestible, as well as softening them so that they blend easily.

Note #2: If you're allergic to walnuts, consider using lightly toasted sunflower seeds instead.

This recipe is one of my mainstays. It's super easy-to-make, savory and flavorful, and appeals to both kids and adults. The nutrient-dense ingredients include walnuts, which contain a high amount of brain-healthy omega 3 fatty acids. For holidays, serve it as a dip for crudites. For leftovers, it makes for a great sandwich filling. -- Hilla Abel

(c) Hilla Abel. Hilla Abel is a natural foods chef and cooking instructor in Berkeley. She helps you answer the nagging "What's for Dinner?" question through culinary coaching, so that you feel confident in creating healthy, easy, and enjoyable meals for yourself or your family. Visit her at www.HealthInAPan.com.



**Nourish Your Mood:
Meditation and Eating with the Brain in Mind**
L. Rebecca Connell, LCSW
LCS19814

www.centerforstressreduction.com | 5845 College Ave., Suite 2, Oakland, CA 94618 | (510) 594-8224

a savory side dish

squash "pie"

Serves: 8

Ingredients

- 2 medium butternut squash, cut in half, seeded
- 3 tablespoons butter or coconut oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon celtic sea salt

Instructions

1. Rub squash with a dab of coconut oil
2. Place cut side down on a metal baking sheet
3. Bake squash in the oven at 350° for 40-60 minutes, until soft
4. Scoop squash out of skin, discarding skin
5. Place squash in food processor with butter (or oil), eggs, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt
6. Puree until smooth and creamy
7. Place in a 9-inch tart pan or a casserole dish and bake at 350° for 40 minutes

<http://elanaspantry.com/squash-pie/>



Almond Flour Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients

- 1 (15 ounce) canned pumpkin puree (or 1½ cup roasted pumpkin)
- 3 large eggs
- ½ cup coconut milk (whole coconut milk in a can. Natural Value or Native Forest “Simple” has no additives, found in the Indian food aisle, not Asian food aisle, at Berkeley Bowl West.)
- ½ cup honey (or can do ¼ c honey and ¾ c coconut milk)
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon celtic sea salt
- 1 almond flour Pie Crust, unbaked (recipe follows, optional, can be crustless)

Instructions

1. In a food processor combine pumpkin puree, and eggs
2. Use either the thick part of the coconut milk, or some of the thick and some of the thin parts. Pulse in coconut milk, honey, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt
3. Pour filling into Pie Crust
4. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes
5. Allow to cool then refrigerate for 2 hours to set up

Almond Flour Pie Crust

Ingredients

- 2 cups blanched almond flour (or hazelnut or other nut flours)
- ¼ teaspoon celtic sea salt
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 large egg

Instructions

1. Place flour and salt in food processor and pulse briefly
2. Add coconut oil and egg and pulse until mixture forms a ball


3. Grease 9-inch pie dish with coconut oil with your fingers or towel, Press dough into pie dish, patting and spreading with your fingers.

<http://elanaspantry.com/>



Spiced Pumpkin Muffins

From cookbook by Danielle Walker

2 cups  blanched almond flour
3 TB coconut flour
1 tsp baking soda
2 tsp cinnamon
3/4 tsp nutmeg
1/4 tsp ginger
1/4 tsp cardamom
1/4 tsp cloves
1/4 tsp sea salt

3/4 cup pumpkin puree (canned ok)
1/3 cup honey or maple syrup
2 large eggs - room temp
2 TB coconut oil - melted
1 tsp vanilla

optional:

1/4 cup dairy free choc chips or dried cranberries, can be found apple-juice sweetened
1/4 cup pecans

Directions

Combine wet and dry ingredients separately, then combine adding pecans and chocolate chips last.

Spoon into muffin tin lined with paper liners, makes 12.

Cook 20-25 min. at 350 degrees until toothpick comes clean.



Tishpishti

Turkish Rosh Hashanah honey cake, but could work for Hanukah too! Relying on ground nuts instead of flour and soaked in honey citrus syrup, the cake is decadent and sweet. The importance of honey as a sweet New Year food is well known, but nuts too hold a special place in Jewish tradition. The fruit of the almond tree can be bitter, but the almond is the first tree that blossom in Israel in the spring, it embodied hope for renewal among the rabbis of old. As we head into the New Year, we hope for a year that is straight forward and a fresh start. We hope that we are blessed with luck and with a lack of enemies and that even our most bitter parts might be transformed into sweet possibilities.

Cake Batter:

6 eggs, separated
½ cup sugar or honey
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon water
1 tablespoon whiskey or more water
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
dash ground cloves
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
2 cups ground walnuts, or almond or hazelnut flour (Berkeley Bowl)
grated rind of 1 orange
grated rind of 1 lemon

Syrup:

¾ cup honey
1 teaspoon lemon juice
¼ cup water

- 1) Grease 9 x 13-inch baking pan. Preheat oven to 350 F.
- 2) Beat egg yolks until thick and lemon colored. Add sugar gradually and continue to beat until mixture is smooth and sugar is absorbed.
- 3) Stir in vanilla, whisky, 1 tablespoon water, cinnamon, cloves, baking soda, nuts, and grated rinds.
- 4) Using clean bowl and beaters, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Fold whites into egg yolk mixture until no white streaks are visible.
- 5) Pour into prepared pan. Bake in preheated 350 F oven 30 minutes, or until toothpick inserted into center of cake comes out clean. Cool cake in pan.
- 6) Meanwhile prepare syrup. In saucepan, combine honey, lemon juice, and ¼ cup water. Cook until mixture comes to a boil. Remove from heat and let cool.
- 7) With toothpick, poke tiny holes in surface of cake. Pour lukewarm syrup over cake and cool completely in pan. Allow to stand until all syrup is absorbed. Cut into small squares.

Gilda Angel, [Sephardic Holiday Cooking](#).

<http://forward.com/articles/143451/tishpishti/#ixzz3sBnevRbM>



**Nourish Your Mood:
Meditation and Eating with the Brain in Mind**
L. Rebecca Connell, LCSW
LCS19814

www.centerforstressreduction.com | 5845 College Ave., Suite 2, Oakland, CA 94618 | (510) 594-8224

Ginger and Spice: Herbal Gifts for the Holidays, Green Path Herb School
Elaine Sheff
<https://awc32f5.aweb.page/ginger-and-spice-landing-page>



**Nourish Your Mood:
Meditation and Eating with the Brain in Mind
L. Rebecca Connell, LCSW
LCS19814**

www.centerforstressreduction.com | 5845 College Ave., Suite 2, Oakland, CA 94618 | (510) 594-8224

Eating meditation

Picking up a small piece of fruit, like a raisin, a fresh grape or berry, or a wedge of apple or orange.

Trying a thought experiment, imagining that you have just arrived on this planet from outer space and you have never seen anything like this before.

Just looking. Looking at this amazing object, without needing to know its name. Spending time just seeing color, shape, form. Noticing the differences between the different parts of it.

Just beginning to experience the sense of touch. Feeling it with the fingers, noticing the contours, the textures, the weight. If you like, letting it touch the face and any part of the body.

Beginning to listen, holding it up to your ear and seeing if there is a sound. Seeing if a sound is produced by rubbing or touching the fruit next to the ear.

Holding it up to the nose and smelling, noticing the sensations. Noticing liking and not liking. Noticing if anything starts to happen in the mouth when smelling happens.

Gently savoring it in the mouth without biting. And slowly, slowly, biting down once and noticing what happens.

Eating with awareness of all the conditions and people that created this moment.



**Nourish Your Mood:
Meditation and Eating with the Brain in Mind
L. Rebecca Connell, LCSW
LCS19814**

www.centerforstressreduction.com | 5845 College Ave., Suite 2, Oakland, CA 94618 | (510) 594-8224

Mindful Eating with Four Hungers

Sitting quietly with the loving lamp of your awareness.

Noticing your hunger.

Rating your hunger from 0-10, 0 being not hungry and 10 being very very hungry.

Picking up food and rating:

Eye hunger from 0-10, 0 being does not look like appetizing, not hungry and 10 being looks delicious, very hungry

Nose hunger from 0-10, 0 being doesn't smell good, not hungry and 10 being smells delicious, very hungry

If you like, eating a bite of the food, and then rating:

Mouth hunger from 0-10, 0 being mouth not interested, not hungry and 10 being would like to experience more of this food, very hungry

Heart hunger from 0-10, 0 being this food might make me feel anxious, not hungry and 10 being this food would be very comforting, very hungry

Pausing partway through eating to repeat.

Reba Connell, Adapted from Jan Chozen Bays, MD, Mindful Eating