

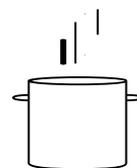


Fruity Mince Pies

No Christmas is complete without some tasty homemade mincemeat. Forget the shop bought jars – these are laden with sugar and suet. Making your own is simple and tastes absolutely divine. This mincemeat is full of fresh and dried fruits, nuts and spices. Sweetened only with rich agave nectar and the natural sugars of the fruits this is a great healthy alternative. Use it as a filling for mince pies, muffins, cakes and tarts. Mincemeat combines well with apples and pears – try stirring a little into fruit mixtures for crumbles and bakes or add a spoonful into Greek yogurt for a quick tasty pudding. As it does not contain suet it is best stored in the fridge (for up to a week) or you can freeze it in batches.



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Ingredients

To make the fruity mincemeat:

- 225g (8oz) sultanas
- 225g (8oz) raisins
- 60g (2oz) dried cranberries
- 225g (8oz) dried apricots
- 110g (4oz) dried figs
- 110g (4oz) dried dates, pitted
- 110g (4oz) chopped almonds
- 3 dessert apples, washed, cored and chopped
- 2 pears, washed, cored and chopped
- 3 lemons, juice and zest
- 2tsp (10ml) mixed spice
- 1tbsp (15ml) ground cinnamon
- 1tsp (5ml) ground cloves
- pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
- 75ml (5tbsp) rum or brandy, optional
- 100ml (4floz) Groovy Food Agave Nectar Rich and

Directions

To make the fruity mincemeat:

1. Wash the dried fruit.
2. Chop the apricots, figs and dates into small pieces with scissors.
3. Place all the dried fruit in a large bowl and cover with apple juice or boiling water. Leave to soak for an hour.
4. Drain well and mix the dried fruit with the spices, fresh fruit, lemon zest and juice and nuts and place in batches in a food processor.
5. Pulse gently to chop the mixture but do not over-process.

Dark

To make the shortcrust pastry:

200g (8oz) plain flour, sifted
100g (4oz) unsalted butter
25g (1oz) ground almonds
50g (2oz) icing sugar, sifted
1 egg, beaten

Glaze:

1 egg yolk and 1tbsp milk
400g fruity mincemeat

6. Warm the Agave Nectar slightly with the rum (if using) and add to the mixture making sure to mix well.
7. Place in airtight containers or jars and refrigerate or freeze in batches.

To make the shortcrust pastry:

1. Place the flour, butter, almonds, sugar and egg in a food processor and whizz until it comes together to form a ball.
2. Knead gently on a lightly floured work surface then cover in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.
3. Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6.
4. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface and stamp out rounds to line a bun tin.
5. Fill each case with mincemeat.
6. If covering with a top, cut out slightly smaller rounds of pastry and dampen the edges. Press these on top of the pies and seal the edges well. Alternatively, stamp out little pastry stars and place on the top of the pies.
7. Mix the egg and milk together and brush over the pies to glaze.
8. Prick the lids with a fork to allow steam to escape. Bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes until golden brown. Cool in the tin for 5-10 minutes then turn out on to a wire rack to cool completely. Dust with a little icing sugar and serve warm.

To make Mincemeat Cake Bars

If you love this fruity mincemeat and fancy a change from mince pies then try these quick, healthy mincemeat cake bars.

1. In a large bowl combine 250g wholemeal self raising flour with 2tsp baking powder.
2. Stir in 450g mincemeat, 4 beaten eggs and 2tbsp Groovy Food mild agave nectar.
3. Stir to combine then spoon in to a rectangular shallow tray bake tin.
4. Bake in the oven at 180°C, gas mark 4 for 25-30 minutes until golden brown.
5. Cool in the tin then cut into bars.