

# 10 *Secretly* Healthy Chocolate Desserts

Vegan e-Cookbook / By Carol Clayton



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# Hello Chocolate

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## Let's fall in love

Does the word *chocolate* put a huge smile on your face? Just thinking about a freshly baked chocolate chip cookie or a pot of silky chocolate mousse makes me want to do a little happy dance right in my kitchen. Let's be chocolate buddies and whip up some *\*insanely\** delicious desserts together! The fact that they're vegan and gluten-free will be our little secret.

In this e-cookbook, I've gathered 10 of my favorite dessert recipes for our little chocolate party. These are no-fail recipes you can pull out of your back pocket whenever you need a decadent treat. Some are on the fancier side like Dark Chocolate Tart and Mini Chocolate Bundt Cakes. I love these for special occasions. And others are simple blender recipes like 5-minute Avocado Chocolate Mousse, when you need to satisfy a craving asap!

I'm delighted to share all of them with you and can't wait to become chocolate buddies together!



# Table of Contents

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## No-Bake Treats

1

Chocolate Chia Pudding      pg. 5-6

2

Dark Chocolate Tart      pg. 7-9

3

Chocolate Covered Chickpea Clusters  
pg. 10-11

## Bakery Fresh Classics

4

Mini Chocolate Bundt Cakes      pg. 12-14

5

Mini Banana Muffins with Chocolate Chips  
pg. 15-17

6

Classic Chocolate Chip Cookies  
pg. 18-20

# Table of Contents

---

## Blendeable Treats

7

Avocado Chocolate Mousse pg. 20-22

8

Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough pg. 23-24

9

Super Seed Energy Bites. pg. 25-26

10

Red Velvet Hot Cocoa pg. 27-28



# Chocolate Chia Pudding



# Chocolate Chia Pudding

For years I've been mixing chia seeds with coconut water as fuel before long runs. The chia seeds release sustained energy that rivals any energy gel I've ever tried. While I'm a fairly new arrival to the vegan chia pudding scene, the chia seed/coconut idea works in the same way. Whisk chia seeds, cocoa, maple syrup, and coconut milk, and it will magically thicken. How does it taste? Addictively delicious, like a rich milk chocolate bar in creamy pudding form.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of lite coconut milk, stirred until no lumps remain (from a can not a box)
- 3 tablespoons of chia seeds
- 3 tablespoons of Dutch cocoa powder
- 3 tablespoons of maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- 1/8 teaspoon of fine sea salt

## DIRECTIONS

1. Pour the lite coconut milk into a medium-sized mixing bowl followed by the rest of the ingredients.
2. Whisk until all the cocoa powder lumps are mixed in with the chia seeds and it looks like thick hot chocolate.
3. Pour into 2 glass jars.
4. Place jars in the fridge to chill and thicken- 4 hours or overnight.

# Dark Chocolate Tart



# Dark Chocolate Tart

This vegan dark chocolate tart is one of my all-time favorite desserts and I'm SO excited to share it with you! It gets rave reviews at gatherings, and potlucks, and I make it every year for the holidays. The no-bake crust and filling come together in about half an hour. It holds its shape perfectly, even at room temperature. Oh, and it freezes like a dream!

## INGREDIENTS

For the crust:

- 1½ cups (135 grams) of gluten-free rolled oats
- ½ cup (65 grams) of pecans
- 2 tablespoons of cocoa powder
- ¼ teaspoon of fine sea salt
- 2 tablespoons of refined coconut oil, melted and pourable
- 2 tablespoons of maple syrup
- 1½ cups (220 grams) of medjool dates, pitted (about 12 large dates)

For the dark chocolate filling:

- 13.5 oz can (1¾ cups, 400 ml) of full-fat coconut milk, whisked until no lumps remain
- ¼ teaspoon of agar powder (not agar flakes)
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- 1¾ cups (9oz. / 255 grams) of good quality dark chocolate, chopped
- 2 tablespoons of maple syrup



# Dark Chocolate Tart

## DIRECTIONS

For the crust:

1. Rub the bottom and sides of a 9.5 x 1.5" tart pan with oil.

2. Combine rolled oats, pecans, cocoa powder, and salt in a food processor and pulse until coarsely ground.

3. Pour the melted coconut oil and maple syrup over the oat mixture and add in the dates. Process until the mixture begins to clump together and can form a ball when pressed between your fingers.

4. Using your hands, spread the dough evenly over the bottom and sides of the tart pan. Continue to press the dough until it is nice and smooth and evenly covers the pan.

5. Place in the freezer to set while you make the filling.

For the dark chocolate filling:

1. Chop the chocolate into small pieces and scrape them into a medium-sized bowl.

2. Whisk the coconut cream, agar powder, and vanilla in a small mixing bowl until the agar is dissolved. Pour into a small saucepan.

3. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. You'll know it's ready when little bubbles form around the sides and begin to rise up from the bottom of the pan, and the milk has reached at least 185 F (85 C).

4. Pour the hot milk over the chopped chocolate and let sit for 5 minutes without stirring. Then whisk until smooth and glossy. Add the maple syrup and continue to whisk until combined.

5. Pour into prepared crust and place in the fridge to set for at least 1 hour.

# Chocolate Covered Chickpea Clusters



# Chocolate Covered Chickpea Clusters

Have you ever tried *chocolate*-covered chickpeas? At first glance, it may seem odd to pour melted chocolate over beans. But when you think about it, chocolate can turn even the humblest ingredients into something special. And...this is one of the easiest to make and healthiest treats out there!

## INGREDIENTS

- (1) 15 oz. can (425 grams / 1½ cups) of chickpeas (garbanzo beans) drained, well rinsed, and patted dry
- 1 cup (170 grams) of dairy-free chocolate chips
- Coarse sea salt for sprinkling

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 350 F / 180 C / gas mark 4. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper for roasting the chickpeas. Then line another baking sheet with parchment paper for the clusters.
2. Drain and thoroughly rinse the chickpeas so they don't taste "beany". Then dry them with a kitchen towel and spread them evenly on the baking sheet.

3. Roast the chickpeas until they are hard and crunchy. This will take about 60 minutes in a standard oven. You'll need to stir the chickpeas every 20 minutes to ensure even roasting. If you have a convection oven, this will take 35-40 minutes. The best way to test if they're done is to eat one!
4. Place the chocolate chips in a microwave-safe bowl or a small saucepan. Melt in the microwave at 30-second intervals, stirring in between, until smooth and glossy. Or, melt on the stovetop over medium heat, stirring until smooth.
5. Pile the roasted chickpeas into the melted chocolate and stir until well-coated.
6. Using a spoon, scoop about 1 tablespoon of chocolate-covered chickpeas onto the parchment-lined baking sheet, forming a cluster shape. Sprinkle with coarse sea salt and let cool until firm. You can place them in the fridge or freezer to speed this up.
7. Once the chocolate is firm, they are ready to eat! Store in an airtight container in the pantry or in the fridge if there is a chance the chocolate might melt.

# Mini Chocolate Bundt Cakes



# Mini Chocolate Bundt Cakes

This chocolate bundt cake recipe is almost as easy as using a mix but looks super fancy in the mini cake molds. It's dense, moist, cakey, and full of rich chocolatey flavor. I love that you can also use it to make 12 standard cupcakes. And the two-ingredient chocolate ganache is literally the icing on the cake!

## INGREDIENTS

For the mini chocolate bundt cakes

- 1½ cups (188 grams) of gluten-free baking flour
- ¾ cup (100 grams) of coconut sugar
- ¼ cup (25 grams) of unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 1 teaspoon of baking soda
- ½ teaspoon of fine sea salt
- 1 cup of cold water
- 1/3 cup (80 ml.) of canola oil
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml.) of distilled white vinegar
- 1½ teaspoons of vanilla extract

For the chocolate ganache

- 6 tablespoons (60 grams) of dairy-free chocolate chips
- ¼ cup (2 oz. / 59 ml.) of full-fat coconut milk

# Mini Chocolate Bundt Cakes

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 350 F / 180 C / gas mark 4. Prep your mini bundt pan by greasing the insides with coconut oil, vegan butter, or shortening. Then dust the insides of the molds with sifted cocoa powder. Flip the pan over and tap out any excess cocoa. You want all the little grooves in the pan greased and coated so the cakes won't stick.
2. Whisk the flour, coconut sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt in a medium mixing bowl, making sure there are no lumps.
3. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and pour the water, canola oil, vinegar, and vanilla. Mix by hand, until combined and smooth.
4. Carefully spoon the batter into the prepared molds. You should be able to fill 4 (1 cup) capacity molds  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of batter. Give the pan a tap on the counter to let the batter settle into all the grooves and release any air bubbles.
5. Bake for 30 minutes. You'll know they're done when a toothpick inserted into the cake comes out clean. The tops will look cracked but will spring back when pressed. For standard-sized cupcakes, bake for 20-22 minutes.
6. Let the cakes cool for a full 20 minutes before unmolding. Then, invert the pan so the cakes can easily slide out.
7. To make the ganache, add the chocolate chips and coconut milk to a dish and microwave, at 20-second intervals, stirring in between, until melted, smooth, and glossy. You can also melt the ganache in a small saucepan, on the stovetop, over medium heat.
8. When the cakes are completely cool, drizzle the tops with chocolate ganache and decorate with fresh raspberries!

# Mini Banana Muffins with Chocolate Chips



# Mini Banana Muffins with Chocolate Chips

I first crafted this recipe back in 2020 when the world was in deep lockdown, and everyone was making banana bread. It was utterly comforting to fill my kitchen with that sweet, fresh from the oven, aroma. You know, the kind of smell that makes you hungry even though you just ate lunch? Total bliss! To this day, I light up when pulling the trays out of the oven. And I can promise you, they taste even better than they smell!

## INGREDIENTS

### Dry Ingredients

- 2 cups (200 g) of gluten-free oat flour OR regular rolled oats
- 2 teaspoons of baking powder
- ½ teaspoon of fine sea salt

### Mix In

- 1/3 cup (57 g) of mini chocolate chips (plus more for decorating the tops)

### Wet Ingredients

- 1 cup (8 oz) of mashed very ripe banana (2 medium bananas)
- 1/3 cup (2.6 oz) of maple syrup
- ¼ cup (2 oz) of almond milk
- ¼ cup (2 oz) of tahini
- 2 teaspoons of fresh orange zest

PREP : 20 MINUTES - COOK : 16 MINUTES - - MAKES : 28



# Mini Banana Muffins with Chocolate Chips

## DIRECTIONS

1. Pre-heat oven to 375° F / 190° C / gas mark 5. Line 2-3 mini muffin pans with muffin cups for 28 muffins.

2. Whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt in a medium mixing bowl. If you are making homemade oat flour, blend 2 cups of regular rolled oats in a high-powered blender until it has a very fine texture that feels powdery and not sandy.

3. Use a fork to mash up the bananas until well blended, like baby food. Measure out 1 cup, saving any extra for another purpose.

4. Plop the banana pulp into a large mixing bowl and pour in the maple syrup, almond milk, and tahini, followed by the orange zest. Mix it all together.

5. Add the flour mixture to the banana mixture in three parts, stirring until smooth after each addition. The batter will be a little lumpy and that's okay.

6. Fold in the mini chocolate chips.

7. Use a 1½ tablespoon cookie scoop or a spoon to fill each mini muffin cup. You want to fill the cups to the rim for nice high domes. If there are extra empty muffin cups without any batter, fill each one halfway with water before sliding the pan into the oven. This helps the muffins bake evenly without drying out.

8. Drop a few mini chocolate chips on the top of each cup for decoration.

9. Bake for 16 minutes. Once they are out of the oven, let them cool for 5 minutes and then pluck them out of the tin and place them on a wire rack to cool. If left to cool in the pan steam will form around the sides and bottom making them gummy.



# Classic Chocolate Chip Cookies

# Classic Chocolate Chip Cookies

Call me old fashioned, but I still enjoy baking from a recipe card that you can pull out of a well-loved and moderately organized recipe box, kind of like checking out a book using a paper library card. The card with the most splatters, bent corners, and scribbles in my box is a classic chocolate chip cookie recipe that came with my decades-old Kitchen Aid. This is my vegan, gluten-free adaptation and it's *\*insanely\** tasty.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1½ tablespoons of flaxseed meal (ground flaxseed)
- 3 tablespoons of water
- ½ cup (4 oz.) of vegan butter, slightly softened
- ½ cup (100g) of organic cane sugar
- ½ cup (100g) of organic light brown sugar firmly packed
- 1½ teaspoons of vanilla extract
- 1½ cups (222g) of 1 to 1 gluten-free baking flour (I use Bob's Red Mill)
- ½ teaspoon of baking soda
- ½ teaspoon of fine sea salt
- ¾ cup (135g) of dairy-free chocolate chips

# Classic Chocolate Chip Cookies

## DIRECTIONS

1. Pre-heat oven to 375 F (190 C / gas mark 5). Line 1-2 cookie sheets with parchment paper.
2. Create your “flax egg” by energetically whisking the ground flax seed meal with water in a small bowl. Set aside to gel and thicken. You can use a fork or a small whisk for this task.
3. Sift or whisk the flour, baking soda, and salt into a separate bowl and set aside.
4. In a medium mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, cream the vegan butter, cane, and brown sugar until there are no lumps of butter and it looks fluffy. Stop and scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. This will take about 3 minutes. Then add in the flax egg and vanilla and blend until light and creamy, 1 minute more.
5. Gradually beat the flour mixture into the butter mixture until it forms cookie dough that is soft, yet thick enough to stick to a spoon if turned over.
6. Mix in the chocolate chips by hand, using a wooden spoon. You want an even number of chips in every bite, so mix thoroughly without overworking the dough.
7. Use a 3-tablespoon scoop (or a spoon) to make 16 same-sized cookie dough mounds. Place them on your prepared cookie sheets spaced 2” apart. They will spread out as they cook, so there is no need to flatten them.
8. Bake on the middle oven rack for 12 minutes.
9. Remove from the oven and let cool for 3 minutes before transferring them to a wire rack to finish cooling. They will look poofy and undercooked straight from the oven. This is totally normal. The cookies will “settle” into a classic cookie shape and texture as they cool down.

# Avocado Chocolate Mousse



# Avocado Chocolate Mousse

The first time I tried avocado-based chocolate mousse was at a dinner party for our daughter, Elizabeth, who had just graduated from college. She had recently gone vegan, and it was my keen idea to go to a German restaurant that was famous for its bratwurst. What was I thinking? Our chipper and attentive waiter noticed her struggling over the menu and offered to create a special dessert just for the occasion. Wouldn't you know it? His surprise dessert was avocado chocolate mousse!

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 extra-large ripe avocados (halved and pitted)
- ½ cup of almond milk (or your favorite plant-based milk)
- ½ cup of maple syrup
- ½ cup (50 g) of unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon of fine sea salt

## DIRECTIONS

1. Plop your ripe avocados into a blender or a food processor followed by the milk, maple syrup, cocoa powder, vanilla, and salt.
2. Blend at medium speed for about 30 seconds to combine your ingredients. At this point, you can use the tamper to push the ingredients toward the blade or stop and scrape down the sides of the container. Continue to blend at medium building to high speed until the mousse is silky smooth and creamy. This may take a minute or more depending on what type of blender you're using.
3. Spoon the mousse into 4 glasses and top with fresh berries! Enjoy at room temperature or chilled.

# Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough



# Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough

As a bona fide cookie dough fanatic, I'll come up with any excuse to make cookies so I can actually eat the raw cookie dough instead. This has been a lifelong fixation, even before going vegan. In fact, one of the few treats we were allowed growing up in our 70's granola-style kitchen, was licking raw cookie dough off the beaters before mom put a fresh batch of cookies into the oven. My sister and I would get one beater each and it felt like Christmas. This recipe is just as irresistible as raw cookie dough but made with totally healthy ingredients that are safe to eat.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (15 oz. / 425g) of garbanzo beans, drained and well rinsed
- ¼ cup (2 oz.) of maple syrup
- ¼ cup of creamy peanut butter
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon of baking soda (for cookie dough flavor)
- ¼ teaspoon of fine sea salt or kosher salt
- 1/3 cup (30 g) of quick-cooking oats
- ¼ cup (40 g) of mini chocolate chips or cacao nibs

## DIRECTIONS

1. Grab a food processor and tumble in your chickpeas followed by the maple syrup, peanut butter, optional flax seed butter, vanilla, baking soda, and salt.
2. Process for 20-30 seconds and check to see if it is creamy with a bit of texture from the chickpeas.
3. Sprinkle in the oats and continue to process until it resembles cookie dough.
4. Pour in the chocolate chips and use a spatula to mix them in by hand. You can also use the pulse setting if you don't mind some of your chips getting chopped up.
5. Scoop into a bowl to enjoy right away or refrigerate in an airtight container.



# Super Seed Energy Bites



# Super Seed Energy Bites

Energy bites taste like a fudgy dessert but are full of healthy fats and protein making them perfect for snack attacks! They are also super filling and portable. I'll often make a double batch and stash them in the freezer, then pull a few out in the morning to look forward to between meals or after a run.

## INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (110 grams) of medjool dates, pitted (about 6 large dates)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (45 grams) of rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of tahini
- 2 tablespoons of maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons of raw cacao powder
- 2 tablespoons of hemp hearts
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of fine sea salt
- 2 tablespoons of sesame seeds (for rolling the bites in)

## DIRECTIONS

1. First, give your dates a squeeze. You want them to be nice and soft. If they feel stiff, pop them in the microwave for 5-10 seconds until soft and almost sticky.
2. Add the dates and the rest of the ingredients to a food processor (not a blender). Using the pulse setting, process the mixture until it begins to look like coarse sand. Continue to process until a tablespoon of the dough can be rolled into a smooth ball. You may have to stop a time or two and scrape the sides of the container.
3. Scoop out 14 tablespoon-sized balls and roll them between your palms until smooth.
4. Pour the sesame seeds in a small dish and roll the energy bites around in the seeds so they are coated all over. Press the seeds into the bites by rolling them between your palms.
5. Store in the refrigerator for firm energy bites or in the pantry for "fudgy" energy bites. They also freeze really well.

# Red Velvet Hot Cocoa



# Red Velvet Hot Cocoa

This dairy-free hot chocolate tastes like your favorite cake in cozy beverage form! It's super rich and creamy thanks to soaked cashews. I especially love the pretty pink color that comes from the healthy beetroot tucked in there!

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (16 oz.) of cold water
- ½ cup (70g) of raw cashews (soaked until soft)
- ¼ cup of grated red beetroot (raw)
- ¼ cup (25g) tablespoons of unsweetened cocoa powder (or raw cacao powder)
- ¼ cup (2 oz.) of maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon of vanilla
- Pinch of fine sea salt

## DIRECTIONS

1. First, soak your cashews in a jar filled with cold water overnight. Or quick soak the cashews in a heat-proof jar by pouring boiling water over them. They'll be soft after 20 minutes. Drain the cashews and give them a good rinse since the soaking water can be bitter.

2. Plop the water, cashews, beetroot, cocoa powder, maple syrup, vanilla, and salt into a blender. I've had the best luck creating a silky texture with no lumps in a small cup-style blender like a Nutribullet.

3. Secure the lid and blend, at high speed, until completely smooth. This takes 90 seconds in a high-powered blender but may take longer depending on what type of blender you're using.

4. Warm the hot chocolate in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until just simmering. Or heat it up in the microwave (which is what I usually do).

5. Pour into your favorite mug and top with chocolate shavings and mini marshmallows!



## Thank you, dear friend!

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Now that we're officially chocolate buddies, I can give you a big hug for being part of the Vegetafull community. I'm so glad we found each other!

If you need me just follow the trail of chocolate crumbs...

X,o,

*Carol*

29