

Naturally sweet

Healthy, delicious ingredients like dates, sweet vegetables, and maple syrup add layers of rich flavor to almost any dessert. The win: cakes, tarts, puddings, and doughnuts that are seriously decadent, without the extra sugar.

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Photographs by CHARLES MASTERS



The new LAYER CAKE

Crepes made with rye flour for extra flavor and texture are piled high and frosted, then topped with fresh figs to create a gorgeous good-for-you pastry.

A RICH FROSTING

Mix jam with labneh, a Middle Eastern-style yogurt that's almost as thick as cream cheese. Buy it, or make your own by placing plain Greek yogurt in a strainer set over a bowl and refrigerating for a day.

PREP TIP

Use two nonstick skillets to make the crepes twice as fast.

Mix and match Switch up the filling and toppings for a different dessert every time. Whatever fruit is in season works, or go for one of these delectable ideas.

- Chocolate hazelnut butter as the filling, sliced banana on top
- Alternating mascarpone and lemon curd between the layers
- Chocolate ganache for the filling, chocolate glaze as the topper
- Apple butter between the layers, finished with apple slices
- Alternating almond butter and jam as the filling, topped with fresh raspberries



POPPY SEEDS

CHOPPED TOASTED NUTS

EDIBLE FLOWERS

GRANOLA

DOUGHNUTS to die for

These beauties are baked instead of fried and made with almond and whole wheat flour in place of white, so enjoy them for breakfast or dessert (or both!). Their sweetness comes from dates and bananas, and the multicolor toppings are tinted with fruit juice.

1/Rainbow glaze

Start with ¼ cup confectioners' sugar (OK, it's sugar, but barely any) and stir in ½ teaspoon fruit juice. Slowly add more juice until you get the color and consistency you want. You can experiment with different fruit and even veggie juices, but these three are a good place to start. Pink: pomegranate juice. Light orange: orange juice. Lavender: blueberry juice.

2/The dip and drizzle

To evenly coat the doughnuts, mix the glaze in a small bowl. Place each doughnut in the bowl, smooth side down, spin it, then lift it out and set on a rack. To drizzle, place the doughnuts on a rack,

smooth side up, and pour the glaze into a resealable plastic bag. Snip a small hole in the corner, and squiggle lines on doughnuts.

3/One final flourish

Sprinkle doughnuts with one of the tasty toppings shown here before the glaze sets.

Food styling by Jamie Kimms; prop styling by Sarah Cove/EH Management

GET THE GEAR
A Wilton nonstick six-cavity doughnut pan will help you bake perfect treats every time. (\$7, amazon.com)

RICE PUDDING reinvented

Barley and carrots combine for a sweet and complex flavor and a hearty, satisfying texture. Creative topping combos take it to the next level.



Add more love A mix of fruit, nuts, and seeds makes your dessert even dreamier. Anything goes, but here are some nice combinations to play with:

- ↑ Slivered almonds, pomegranate seeds, raspberries
- ← Sliced mango, toasted coconut, black sesame seeds
- Plum wedges, walnuts, dried cherries
- Cacao nibs, toasted chopped hazelnuts, sliced banana
- Peanuts, dried cranberries, chopped strawberries
- Diced pear, toasted pecans, chia seeds

Finish it off These toppers add just the right notes to tie all the flavors together

- A dusting of matcha
- Torn mint or basil leaves
- A drizzle of tahini
- Grated citrus zest
- A dollop of whipped cream

Tricked-out TART

This extravagance is actually simple to make. Just overlap glazed slices of fruit and sweet vegetables (like pears, beets, and sweet potatoes), chopped walnuts, and dried plums on a sheet of puff pastry, then pop it in the oven.

DELICIOUS SWAPS

Use whatever produce looks—and sounds—especially tasty. Try apple in place of pear, parsnip for beet, and butternut squash instead of sweet potato.



À LA MODE IT
Vanilla is always a winner, but rum raisin, salted caramel, butter pecan, dulce de leche, and pistachio are sublime too.



Yes, vegetables make sense for dessert

The right picks can transform puddings, pies, and cakes with their naturally rich, deep flavor. Veggies also add vitamins and minerals to baked goodies.

PUREED

Blend roasted vegetables, then stir into cake, brownie, or muffin batter, add to cream or yogurt for a panna cotta, or bake into a custard pie filling.

CANNED

When you're short on time, canned pumpkin and sweet potatoes can't be

beat. Use them in pie fillings, muffins, quick breads, cheesecake, blondies, and cookies.

SIMMERED

Cook cut-up root vegetables, sweet potatoes, celery root, or cherry tomatoes in water on the stove with a touch of raw honey, pure maple syrup, cider, or no-sugar-added

fruit juice to infuse them with sweetness. The veggies can then be folded into a cake or muffin batter; baked into a cobbler, a crisp, or a crumble; or spooned over ice cream.

ROASTED

Chunks or slices of beets, sweet potatoes, carrots,

parsnips, winter squash, and fennel caramelize when coated with olive oil and roasted in a hot oven. Give them a drizzle of honey or maple syrup and you'll really bring out their natural sweetness, or combine them with apples or pears as a pie or tart filling, bake them into

a bread pudding, or layer them to make a parfait.

GRATED RAW

Switch up your favorite carrot cake recipe by swapping in parsnips or rutabaga. Use yellow squash instead of zucchini in a quick bread. Or sub grated butternut squash for rice in a milky pudding.

GET THE RECIPES

Scan here for the easy instructions to make the dishes on these pages.

