

Blueberry Superfood Smoothie

This purple powerhouse is so lip-smackingly tasty, you'd never guess it's packed with superfoods. Blueberries deliver fiber and antioxidants, probiotic-rich kefir lends healthful bacteria, and coconut water is the best natural sports drink I know. Not only that, banana kicks up the potassium, chia seeds add omega-3s, and the avocado? It's full of fiber and good-for-you fats that also give the smoothie the creaminess your kids will never guess came from a plant.

1 cup plain kefir or plain yogurt
¾ cup coconut water, *plus more if needed*
1 frozen banana, *cut into thick slices*
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
1 small ripe avocado
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon pure maple syrup
8 ice cubes
1 to 3 teaspoons hemp or chia seeds (*optional*)

Put all of the ingredients except the hemp seeds into a blender and run until creamy and smooth. Add a splash of coconut water to thin the smoothie, if desired. Top with hemp seeds, if desired.

Pour into glasses. Serve immediately.

Recipe by Katie Morford from Rise & Shine (Roost Books, 2016)

Short-Cut Sweet Potato Hummus

Using store-bought hummus makes this wholesome dip a snap to pull together. Just add a tender, cooked sweet potato, a splash of lemon juice, and a squirt of sriracha. It's a tasty balance of sweet, tangy, with just a hint of heat.

1 small sweet potato
1 cup hummus
1/2 lemon
1 teaspoon sriracha

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Pierce the sweet potato with a sharp knife a few times. Cook the sweet potato until tender enough that a knife slides right in without resistance, about 40 minutes (time will vary depending on shape and size of sweet potato).

Cut the sweet potato in half and scoop out the flesh. Put the sweet potato flesh, hummus, juice of the 1/2 lemon, and sriracha into a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Run the food processor until the hummus is creamy and blended.

Transfer to a serving bowl and serve with cut up vegetables and/or whole grain pita chips or crackers.

Recipe by Katie Morford, Mom's Kitchen Handbook

Birdseed Bars

When I first began cooking with millet, I learned that it's a common ingredient in garden-variety birdseed. I imagine birds are fond of pumpkin and chia seeds too, which is why I named these Birdseed Bars. The method for making them is pretty simple. The nuts and seeds get toasted on a single baking sheet until fragrant and then bound with a blend of dates, honey, and nut butter. After that, no further baking is required, just a tiny drizzle of dark chocolate. The result is a bang-up breakfast bar that is crunchy, chewy, and flavorful . . . a mini meal that is most definitely not for the birds.

1 1/4 cups old-fashioned rolled oats (not quick oats)
1/2 cup sliced almonds
1/3 cup raw pepitas (shelled pumpkin seeds)
1/4 cup millet
1/2 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
1 tablespoon chia seeds
1/3 cup dried cranberries or dried cherries
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
5 large medjool dates, pitted
1/4 cup unsweetened almond butter, peanut butter, or sunflower butter
1/4 cup honey
2 tablespoons water
3 tablespoons bittersweet chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line an 8 × 8-inch baking pan with a piece of parchment paper large enough that it drapes over two sides.

Put the oats, almonds, pepitas, millet, and coconut on a large baking sheet and spread out to cover the entire surface evenly. Bake for about 10 minutes, until the oats are fragrant and the coconut is browned. Remove from the oven and transfer to a large bowl. Add the chia seeds, dried cranberries, and salt and stir well.

Put the dates, nut butter, honey, and water into the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Process until the ingredients incorporate to form a thick paste, stopping to scrape down the sides as needed. (Tiny flecks of date skins will remain throughout.)

Spoon the nut butter mixture into the bowl with the oats. Using the sides of a rubber spatula, press and stir the ingredients together until thoroughly combined. Your hands can help with this if you don't mind getting a little sticky.

Dump the dough into the prepared pan and use your hands to press it very firmly into the bottom, creating an even layer that fills the entire bottom of the pan. (It will help to put an extra piece of parchment on top of the dough so your hands won't stick as you press down.)

Put the chocolate chips into a small microwave-safe bowl or ramekin and microwave on high in 30-second bursts, stirring after each one, until the chocolate is smooth, about 1 1/2 minutes. Stir the chocolate again with a fork and then use the fork to drizzle it over the top of the bars (you may need to flick the fork a bit to release the chocolate). Put the pan into the freezer for 30 minutes, or until firm.

Remove the pan from the freezer. Run a knife around the edge of the dough and use the two draping sides of parchment to lift it out of the pan. Transfer to a cutting surface and use a large knife to cut the block into 12 bars.

Store bars in a resealable bag or airtight container. Keep them in the refrigerator, where they will stay nice and chewy.

Note: Bars will keep in the fridge for several weeks. They can also be stored in the freezer.

Recipe by Katie Morford from Rise & Shine (Roost Books, 2016)