

SWEETS

W E E T S

- *Regardless of what our left brain says about the advisability of eating sweets, our bodies still crave some; after all, glucose, along with protein/fat, is a brain food!*
- *This section, especially the cooked recipes, should obviously be utilized with awareness rather than with abandon; although most recipes have true nutritional value, still do not overdo as even good fruit can be a pancreatic overload to some.*
- *Eating fresh, in-season fruit, along with a fat/protein such as nuts or cheese which slow down absorption and reduce pancreatic impact, between meals is the ideal; try a few fresh pineapple chunks as a dessert, especially after a meat meal. The enzymes in pineapple aid digestion and the bit of sweet can take care of most sweet cravings.*
- *Most fruits eaten raw or dried are very high in antioxidants. Two fruits with the highest levels of these anti-aging phytochemicals are blueberries and cranberries; they contain generous amounts of anthocyanins which help to stimulate the release of unhealthy toxin-laden fat and phenols which improve the strength of connective tissue. Plus chemicals in cranberries also help to ward off urinary tract infections by keeping bacteria from sticking to bladder cells.*
- *Many holistic nutritionists suggest never mixing fruits with veggies or starches, although with meat is fine; as a matter of fact, eating fruits with fatty proteins such as meats/eggs/nuts/seeds, slows down the digestive process enough that the pancreas is not over-stimulated with insulin production making such snacks OK even for many diabetics who are also eating an overall healthful diet.*
- *Cooking fruits however tends to acidify a normally alkaline food, so should be a relatively rare occurrence.*
- *Nuts, while extremely healthful up to 1-2 handfuls daily, do contain high levels of phytates which bind up mineral availability. Therefore, all nuts should be purchased raw and unsalted; soak for 12-24 hrs discarding the water, let dry or salt lightly with **NTM Salt** and roast in 200 °oven. Or for almonds, the only alkaline nut, instead of drying them, whirl them in a blender with enough pure water to make almond milk; strain through some cheesecloth before using.*
- *Instead of oven roasting, try toasting the soaked/dried nuts in a dry skillet over medium heat, shaking the skillet about 3-5 minutes until nuts are a nice golden color.*
- *Coconut is a tremendously healthful and good tasting fat so utilize it liberally when making confections; it is actually an excellent aid for weight balancing. It is best used raw and fresh; light colored coconuts are fresher.*
- *When yogurt is mentioned, it should be made from whole fat raw milk from free-range cows and with various live cultures; or at the very least organically grown! Even many lactose-intolerant individuals can partake of real yogurt made from raw milk. Or make fresh yogurt yourself, even from almond milk.*
- *I have also added a few utterly decadent recipes unredeemed by anything except perhaps the love with which they are prepared. But then again, just how “loving” is it to give someone (or ourselves?) knowingly unhealthy food? Hmmmm. That will have to be an individual philosophical decision!*
- *Many of these suggestions also make excellent options to typical breakfast cereals or when you want a change from your newly acquired healthful habit of soups/stews/skillet!*
- *Usually dates or other dried fruits are sweet-*

ening enough. If not, try organic *Really Raw Honey* (a totally unprocessed honey which still contains pollen, propolis, honeycomb and live enzymes—if your honey is liquid and clear, that means it has been heated and filtered—WWW.REALLYRAWHONEY.COM or 1-800-732-5729), *Grade B organically grown maple syrup* (more nutrients in *Grade B* and organic is necessary because of questionable processing otherwise), or *agave nectar* (ancient sweetener made from naturally organic wild cactus).

- There is also an organically grown sugar, *Rapadura*, available, in which the cane juice is not separated thus retaining essential nutrients; *Sucanat* was similar until the company changed hands. Use *Rapadura* in amounts equal to standard white sugar. Any sweetener should be used quite judiciously.

- *Stevia* is the only natural sweetener that does not affect the pancreas and thus is the only one, according to *Diana Schwarzbein, MD*, which can be used by diabetics despite advertising claims to the contrary. In fact, it is actually a nutrient-rich herb containing substantial amounts of protein, calcium, and phosphorous, as well as sodium, magnesium, zinc, rutin, vitamin A, vitamin C, and over 100 phytonutrients and apparently can truly aid in overcoming cravings not only for sugar but also alcohol and tobacco. With 20-30 drops of whole leaf concentrate each meal, many have reported reduction in high blood sugar levels and plaques along with increased energy levels, mental acuity, digestion and immune response. Cooking with *stevia* is possible as it stays stable up to 375° however it does not brown as does sugar or *Rapadura*.

All purchasable *stevias* are NOT created equal however; that from *Paraguay* is considered by many to be the most healthful without any bit-

ter aftertaste. Whole *stevia* powder (greenish) contains all health benefits but is not water soluble while the concentrated liquid form (very dark) still contains all health benefits and IS water soluble; but **READ LABELS** and avoid “blends” which contain sugars and fillers. The clear *steviosides* contain no specific nutrients at all but certainly would be a far better choice than any artificial sweetener such as the aspartame-containing *NutraSweet*, *Equal*, *Spoonful*, *Equal-Measure*, etc. and *sucralose*-containing *Splenda*.

- Now that we know that chocolate actually has nutritional benefits, the carob substitution may not be so necessary. Chocolate lovers might experiment with substituting 3T very high quality cocoa powder dissolved in 2T warm water mixed with 1T pureed dates for each ounce of either bittersweet or semisweet chocolate; sweeten, if necessary, the result with agave, *Rapadura* or *stevia* to maintain recipe balance.

- **WARNING:** Any individual who has, or who suspects, a candida/yeast overload, should avoid this section until the yeast is under control and the body is back to a more alkaline balance. Aside from *stevia* which does not feed yeast, only limited amounts of raw fruit with a fatty/protein accompaniment should be considered.

UNCOOKED

Almond Stuffed Dates—pit 20 large Medjool or Black Sphinx **dates**, stuff with a whole soaked/dried almond.

Ambrosia— mix together 2 each diced **apple**, **orange**, **banana**, 1 cup sweet **grapes**, 1/2 cup **raisins**, 1 cup vanilla **yogurt** (sweetened with honey), and 1 cup shredded **coconut**.

Applesauce—blend together coarsely (pulse the blender) 6 cored **apples** (use a variety of tarts and sweets) with 2T **lemon juice** and 1/2 cup **Really Raw Honey**. Add a dash of **cinamon**, **nutmeg** or **allspice** if desired. *Variation:* delete honey and add 2-3 **dates** and 1/2 cup shredded **coconut**.

Granulated Sugar	Whole Stevia leaf powder	White Stevia Extract (powder)
1 teaspoon	1/8 teaspoon	Dust on spoon
1 Tablespoon	3/8 teaspoon	1/2 pinch
1/4 cup	1 1/2 teaspoon	Pinch
1/2 cup	1 Tablespoon	1/8 teaspoon
1 cup	2 Tablespoon	1/4 teaspoon

Avocado Delights *yes, avocados can make delicious chilled deserts; try these ideas!*

Carob Pudding: blend 2 **avocados** until smooth; add 1.75 cups pitted/chopped **dates**, a little at a time, with 3/4 cup **water** and blend until smooth; mix in 3T **carob**, pour into 4-6 individual cups and chill.

Lemon Pudding: smash together 2 cups ripe **avocado** with juice of 1 **lemon**; add 1.5 cups seeded **lemon pulp/flesh**, 2 cups pitted/minced **dates**, and up to 4T **honey/maple syrup/agave**.

Miracle Mousse: In food processor, blend until smooth: 2 c dried **coconut**, 3 T **agave/honey**, 1/2 t **salt**, 3 peeled/pitted **avocados**, 1 c **carob/cocoa powder**, 3/4 c pitted **dates** (strong tasting to dominate avocado taste), 1/2 t **cinnamon**, 1 t **vanilla** and pinch of **salt**.

Banana Carob Pops—*no amounts specified here; just wing it according to number and size of bananas!* Mix together chopped **nuts** (any kind of soaked/dried) and **carob powder** in tall cup adding water until you have a thick, creamy consistency. Cut ripe **bananas** (with brown speckles) in half, insert stick into cut end of banana halves and dip in carob nut mixture. Place "pops" on wax paper or plastic wrap in freezer until frozen.

Cashew Date Topper—In blender blend 2 cups **cashews** with enough water to allow blender to run. When smooth, add in 8-13 pitted **Medjool dates** and 1 tsp **vanilla**.

Coconut Apricot Truffles—Blend together: 1.5 cups whole unsalted/soaked/dried **almonds**, 2 cups dried **apricots**, 2 tsp **cinnamon**, 2 tsp **almond extract**. When mixture is of a dough-like consistency, form into 1" balls and roll in 1/2 cup sweetened shredded **coconut**.

Date "Fudge"—Blend together 2 cups soaked **cashews**, 1 cup @ pitted **dates** and soaked **raisins**, 4T **carob powder**, and 1 cup **water** together in blender. When smooth, hand-mix in 1 cup @ ground soaked **almonds** and **walnut pieces**. Spread in a rectangular greased pan, cover with plastic wrap and freeze for a few

hours before cutting into pieces to serve.

Date Sauce—blend together until smooth: 1 cup **pitted dates** and 1/2 cup **carob powder** with just enough **water** for a thick creamy texture.

Double Decker Fruit Cake *this is NOT one of those quick'n'easy recipes but great for a special occasion*—In blender or food processor, process together 2 cups @ **hazelnuts/filberts** and **raisins** and 1/4 cup **figs**. On a serving plate, press mixture into a shape like a round cake layer about 8" in diameter and 1/2" thick. For filling between layers, process 1 cup pitted **dates** and juice of 2T **lemon juice** in blender, adding 1tsp **lemon zest (grated rind)** after rest is blended, adding a few drops of water if necessary to thin; spread about 1/3 of mixture onto first layer. For top layer, process 2 cups @ **walnuts/pecans** and **currants** plus 1/4 cup **figs**. On a sheet of waxed paper, form into another layer and carefully place on top of frosted first layer. Completely frost the outside of the cake with the balance of the lemon-date frosting and garnish with a thin curl of sliced lemon.

Figgy Pudding—Blend 12 pitted **dates**, 12 black mission **figs** and 1 quart (more or less; start with less) **water**. When smooth, add 1tsp **carob powder**.

Fruit Nut Truffles—Blend together: 1.5 cups **walnuts**, 1 cup dried **figs**, 1/2 cup dried **cranberries**, 1/2 cup **raisins**, 1 tsp **cinnamon**, pinch **ginger**, 1 tsp **vanilla extract**. When mixture is of a dough-like consistency, form into 1" balls, top each with **walnut half** squishing ball slightly

Fruitsicle—simply chunk fresh **watermelon**, stick in a stick, and freeze. A great alternative to unhealthy popsicles! *Variation:* offer *any* frozen fruit. I learned this from my clever daughter who loved to delve into the freezer for available bags of organic frozen strawberries, other berries, cherries or peaches. Good girl!

Fruit Yogurt—In lieu of highly sugared fruit

yogurts, simply get the whole fat plain variety (from raw, free-range milk) and put into your own “Tupperware” container; and pop in frozen fruit of your choice. Take as-is to work/school and you won’t even have to refrigerate it as the frozen fruit will keep the yogurt plenty cold!

Harvest Fruit Delight—toss together 4 diced **pears** (Bartlett, Red Bartlett, Anjou, or Comice), 2 cups red and green seedless **grapes** (Flame, Ruby, Ribier or Thompson), 2 diced green or red **apples** (Delicious, Fuji, or McIntosh) and 1/2 cup toasted **pecans** with 2 T aged **balsamic vinegar** and 1 T **raw honey**

Ice Cream—is there anything more delightful than this occasional frozen treat?

Banana Date: Mix together 2 cups minced **dates**, 6T **honey/agave**, 4 ripe **bananas**, 4T **orange juice**. Then whip up 2 pints **whipping cream** and fold into fruit mixture. Place into freezer on low setting and whip 2-3 times during freezing process.

One-Each Fruit Cake—Run through your food processor or finely mince 1 cup @ pitted **dates**, **raisins**, and pitted **prunes** (or moist dried figs, apricots, etc.). Add 1 cup @ soaked, dried and freshly ground **pecan** and **walnut** meats plus 1 cup shredded **coconut** and mix well. Moisten all with a small amount of **honey/agave**; press into a lightly greased mold and let sit for a few hours until ready to unmold onto a pretty platter. Garnish with extra **coconut** sprinkled on and a sprig or two of **mint**.

Peach “Pie”—Combine 1 cup freshly **shredded coconut**, 1/2 cup **ground dates**, and 1/4 cup soaked, dried and freshly **ground almonds** for “shell” press into proper shape in a pie plate. Mix 4 cups **finely chopped peaches** (or other fruit) with 1/2 cup **raw honey**, drain off any excess liquid and fill shell. Top with a layer of fresh **whipped cream**. **Variation**: simply mix all ingredients together for a raw custard.

Smoothies *Where would we be without fruit smoothies? As you’re racing out the door to*

*work or school, take 2 minutes to make one of these instead of a (shudder) toaster pastry or (more shudders) diet meal replacer. While there are possibly a million different combinations, this is a particularly **healthful basic recipe**:*

2 cups liquid—the natural and healthful saturated fats in range-free milk/cream/yogurt or coconut milk will keep the fruit from zapping your pancreas making smoothies possible even for some pancreatic-challenged individuals with hypo/hyper-insulinism. Home-made almond milk can also be used. Or half-and-half with pure water or fresh carrot/apple juice.

1 raw range-free egg yolk—with its high B-complex and Omega 3 fatty acids which are so often overlooked when going raw, vegetarian, or just weight-loss, this is a very nutritionally important ingredient that I have seen nowhere else. Good yolks have no taste other than perhaps a slight vanilla sense. Dr. Joseph Mercola (WWW.MERCOLA.COM) says that the “dangers” of raw eggs, binding of B-Vitamins and *salmonella*, simply do not exist in real life; the amount of B-complex in the yolk is far too great for the *avidin* in the white to bind and there are no nasty microbes in properly-raised free-range eggs.

2 medium bananas—the “smooth” basis of smoothies and a great source of potassium. For a “slushie,” chunk and freeze the bananas before blending. Or, in lieu of one or both bananas, try an avocado (but don’t freeze it!); incredibly delightful with citrus or tropical fruits. For the *really* adventurous, try using frozen pureed squash/pumpkin!

8+ oz frozen fruit—use any organic frozen berries (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, etc.), cherries, peaches, melons, or freeze your own grapes, pineapple, papaya, mango, and such. You can adjust the amounts of frozen fruit according to taste. For more sweetening, simply add 2-3+ pitted dates to the mix; for more bowel regularity add 1-2 figs or pitted prunes instead of dates. NOTE: if you are using frozen bananas, try using *fresh* oranges for an “Orange Julius” effect; you’ll never go back to standard, pancreas-challenging orange juice again!

Blend together—any blender will do for this, even an immersion blender, but I have heard that

perhaps one of the best blenders on the market is the VitaMix (WWW.VITAMIX.COM) if you are going to be doing a lot of blending for a long time; very sturdy and effective!

Drink—and enjoy, but do remember that this is food, and not water, so “chew” it to mix your saliva with it to start the digestive process.

Stuffed Fruit—take any larger **pitted dried fruit** (figs, dates, prunes, apricots) and stuff full of **marscapone** or **cream cheese** mixed with shredded **coconut**; if it’s a flat fruit like an apricot, sort of squeeze the fruit around the filling. Kids can make (and eat!) dozens of these!

Summer Fruit Delight—mix together 1 pint halved or quartered **strawberries**, 2-3 sliced **peaches**, 1 cup **blackberries**, 1 sliced **banana** with 2 T **fruit liquor** (or balsamic vinegar) plus 2 T **raw honey**, 1 T **lemon zest**

Tropical Fruit Delight—mix together 2 cups chunked fresh **pineapple**, 1 @ chunked **mango** and **papaya** with 1 cup shredded **coconut**

COOKED

Almond Fruit Muffins—Grate 1 7oz roll **almond paste**; beat with 1/4 cup **honey/maple syrup** until combined (mixture will look crumbly). Add 4 large **eggs** one at a time, beating well between each addition, until light and fluffy. Add 8T **melted butter** and 1 tsp **vanilla extract**; beat until well combined. Beat 8oz **softened cream cheese** and 1# chopped **apricots/dates** into the egg mixture until well combined. Spoon into greased shallow muffin tins & bake for 25 min, until lightly browned and firm.

Apple Sauce—Place 1/3 cup **water** and 1T **lemon juice** in crockpot; pre-heat to High. Core and wedge 6 **apples**; use a variety of organically grown sweet and tart ones for best flavor. As wedges are cut, place immediately into lemon water and stir to coat to retard browning. Cover crockpot, turn to low and let cook for three hours. When done, smash right in crock with potato masher. Add just a hint of cinnamon if

desired.

Baked Apples—*a perennial favorite with all! For a change of pace, also try using peaches, nectarines or pears. These can also be made in your slow cooker.*

Basic Preparation: core without cutting through bottom and reserve 4-6 firm **apples**, peeling top 1” of each apple and brushing cut surface with fresh **lemon juice**. Place each apple into its own buttered oven-proof bowl or 9” sq baking dish, pack stuffing mixture of choice into apple cavities, cover with foil and bake at 350° about 30 minutes; uncover and bake another 10-15 minutes while basting with juices. Serve room temperature with *crème fraiche*/whipped cream
Fruit’n’Nut: 1/3 cup chopped dried **apricots**, 1/3 cup chopped **walnuts/pecans**, 1/4 cup **Agave nectar**, 1/2 teaspoon ground **cinnamon**, 2 T melted **butter**

Maple Nut: mix together 1/2cup **raisins**, 1/2 cup chopped **almonds/walnuts**, 2 T **butter**, 1/4 tsp @ **nutmeg**, **cinnamon**, and 1/2 cup **maple syrup**.

Sweet Potato Pineapple: 1/2 cup each cooked **sweet potatoes** and drained, **crushed pineapple**, 1/4 cup **raisins**, 1/2 tsp **allspice**, 2T **butter**, 1/4 cup **agave**.

Chocolate Ganache Glaze *great as a fruit dip/fondue (try large, fresh strawberries) or baked apple topper; a little goes a long way!*—Bring water to a simmer in the bottom of a double boiler. Add 2 T **heavy cream** and 2T **butter** to the top of double boiler. Stir until butter is melted. Add 4 oz **bittersweet chocolate** cut into small pieces, being careful that not a drop of water touches the chocolate, and stir until smooth.

Custard *an old-fashioned treat that includes Flan, Brulee, Pot de Crème and on and on, this milk and egg pudding tastes great and is far easier to make than you think! Do remember, however, that heating milk to, or over, 120° destroys valuable raw milk enzymes*—whisk together 8 **egg yolks** and 1/3 cup **Rapadura** until thick and pale yellow. Add 2 cups **heavy cream** and 1 tsp **vanilla extract**; whisk until well blended. Pour

into 6 custard cups/ramekins that are in a deep roaster; set pan in middle of pre-heated oven and pour hot water into roaster until 2/3 up sides of ramekins; bake slow (or on trivet in slow cooker) at 300° until set around the edges but still loose in the center, about 40 to 50 minutes. Remove from oven but leave in the bath until cooled. Remove cups from water bath and chill for at least 2 hours up to 2 days; to avoid “skin” place plastic wrap directly onto custard. Varia-tions—add 1/2-1 cup of the following: grated **semi-sweet chocolate**; mashed cooked **sweet potato/squash**; finely minced dried fruit such as **apricots, prunes, figs** or **dates**; smashed **banana** or **berries** of any kind; Spiced: add up to 1 tsp **cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice** or **cloves** Flavored: try adding 1/4 cup **lemon juice**; 2T **citrus zest**; 1/2 tsp **mint** or **almond** extract Tipsy: add 2T **Kahlua, Bailey’s, Grand Mar-nier, Amagnac, brandy**, etc. Crème Brulée: when ready to serve, sprinkle 2 tsp **Rapadura** over each custard and place under broiler (or use a small hand-held torch) until it melts and browns Flan: melt 2 cups **Rapadura** in skillet until caramel brown and pour into bottom of custard cups; wait until hardened before pouring in custard; to serve, cut around custard carefully and upend onto plate—caramel will flow over custard Blender chocolate mousse: in small pot, heat 1.5 cups **cream** to just under 120° (original recipe calls for scalding); add 1 cup grated **semi-sweet chocolate**, 4 **egg yolks**, 1/2 tsp (your choice) **vanilla/orange/mint**, and, with stick blender, whip until smooth; place into custard cups and chill

Dried Fruit Compote *great for older, dried-out fruit or as a part of a “feast” meal*—In a heavy, large saucepan, combine 5 cups **water**, 3/4 cups **bourbon** or sweet **wine** and 1/3 cup **honey**. Place the pan over medium heat stirring occasionally. Using a vegetable peeler, remove the zest of 1 **orange** in several long strips and add them to the pan. When liquid simmers, add 1 1/4 cups each **apricots** and halved **figs**. Cover partially and simmer, stirring gently once or twice, for 15 minutes. Add 1.25 cup halved, pit-ted **prunes** and 1 cup dried **sweet cherries**, re-

cover partially and simmer until all the fruits are tender but still hold their shape, 4 to 6 minutes. Stir in 2 T **lemon juice**. Remove from heat and let rest until room temperature. Remove and dis-card orange zest. Divide the fruit and the poach-ing liquid among individual dishes.

Dessert or Breakfast Crêpes—whisk to-gether 1 **egg**, 1¼ cups **almond milk**, 1/2 tsp **vanilla extract**, 2/3 cup **pod flour** (mesquite pod meal, carob, amaranth, etc.), pinch **salt**, and 1/2 tsp **sunflower oil** until smooth. In a crepe pan over medium heat, melt 1 tsp. **butter** to coat the pan evenly. Lift the pan at a slight angle and pour about 1/3 cup of the batter into the center, tilting the pan to spread the batter to the edges. Return the pan to the heat and cook until the crepe is golden underneath, about 2 minutes. Using a spatula, flip the crepe over and brown the other side, about 1 minute more. Transfer the crepe to a plate and cover. Repeat to make 8 crepes refreshing butter each time.

Fillings:

- 1/4 cup per crepe of any fruit preparation (or try a banana smashed with **Raw Applesauce**)
- Roll thin or fold into quarters and top with your choice of toppings
- Garnish with citrus curl, fresh whole berry, mint leaf, etc.

Toppings:

- Maple Syrup/Sugar
- Vanilla yogurt
- Fresh whipped cream
- Crème Fraiche—see Nourishing Traditions
- Custard Sauce: in a bowl, whisk together 5 **egg yolks** and 1/3 cup **Rapadura**. In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, bring 2 cups **heavy cream** to a gentle simmer. Slowly and gradually whisk the hot cream into the egg yolk mixture. Return the mixture to the pan and place over low heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon and leaves a clear path when a finger is drawn through it, about 6 minutes. Do not let the mix-ture boil. Transfer custard to a bowl immediately and let cool to room temperature. Stir in 1T **va-nilla extract** and pinch of **salt**. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap, pressing it directly onto the

surface of the custard to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to 3 days. **OR:** mix with 1 can drained **crushed pineapple** or finely chopped reconstituted dried fruit such as **dates** or **apricots** and 1 cup fresh **whipped cream**

Frangipan *This plain, delicious almond cake can be dressed up for any occasion and is far better nutritionally than standard cakes or (shudder) mixes*—Grate one roll (7oz) **almond paste** into a mixing bowl. Add 1/4 cup **honey/maple syrup** and 1 stick room temperature **butter**; mix well on low speed with electric mixer about 2 min. Carefully add 3 room-temperature **eggs** 1 at a time, then beat on high speed until fluffy, about 3 min. Gently fold in 1/2 cup **amaranth flour** (or carob) until just blended. Spread the batter evenly into greased/floured 10” spring-form pan & bake 30 minutes or until golden and an inserted toothpick comes out clean. Top with raw/cooked fruit and/or **Custard Sauce** (as per crepes), **Chocolate Ganache**, **Miracle Mousse**, apricot (or other fruit) preserves, etc. If the occasion warrants, try a flower or fern garnish and use the cake as your centerpiece.

Fudge Frosting *reserve this specialty for when only the most decadent dessert will do. And remember that if you are a true “chocoholic,” you may be deficient in magnesium!*—1 cup **heavy whipping cream**, 1 stick **butter**, 1 box Baker’s **semi-sweet chocolate**, 1 tsp @ **vanilla & almond** extract, 1/2 cup **Rapadura**; cook over low heat until chocolate squares are thoroughly melted, whisking a few times to keep smooth and making sure it never approaches a boil or even a simmer.

Kheer *Indian rice pudding*—In a large, shallow pan over high heat, bring 4 cups **almond milk** and 4 cups **cream** to a boil, stirring frequently to prevent scorching. Add 1/2 cup **Basmati rice** (such as Gobinda bhog), reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is reduced to the consistency of custard and the rice is soft and creamy, about 50 min-

utes. Add about 1/4 cup amber **agave** nectar and mix well. Add 1/2 tsp **cardamom**, 1/2 tsp crushed **saffron** threads, 1/2 cup **raisins** and 1/4 cup **slivered almonds** to the cooked rice mixture and mix well. Transfer to a bowl, let cool, then cover and refrigerate until chilled. Spoon the pudding into small dessert bowls and garnish with **mint leaves**.

Meringues *one thing to do with leftover whites and takes care of that sweet-crunchy thing*—preheat oven to 200° and line cookie sheet with parchment paper. Beat 4 **egg whites** until stiff but not dry; gradually beat in 1/2-1 cup **Rapadura/maple sugar** ground super fine or .75-2.5 tsp **Stevia liquid**. Spoon by tablespoonful onto paper; bake app. 3 hrs until dry. Allow to cool completely before storing in airtight container. *Options:* pipe meringue into kisses, “fingers” or shallow dessert cups for fruit “tarts”; form into flat rectangles or rounds for “sandwiches” with spreads like **Sweet Potato Mousse** or **Chocolate Ganache** *Variations:* add 1/2 c chopped **nuts**, 1/2 c **coconut**, 3T **carob/cocoa** powder, 3/4 tsp cardamom, 1 tsp **lemon zest**, etc.

Pineapple Fig Topper—In a saucepan, combine 8oz finely chopped **figs**, 1 8 oz can crushed **pineapple** (undrained), 1/4 cup **water**, 1/4 cup **wine/balsamic vinegar** and 1/2 tsp **grated orange peel**. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes, or until thick.

Sweet Potato Mousse—smash 3 cooked **sweet potatoes** (roasting supplies richest flavor) with 2 raw **egg yolks**, 1 tsp **vanilla**, a pinch of **NTM salt** and 1/4 - 1/2 cup **carob powder**. Whip until thick, 1/2 cup **whipping cream** and fold gently into sweet potato mix. Serve chilled. *Variation:* add some minced **dates** or **coconut**. ■