

Chapter 7



**The Sweeteners:
Sugar, Honey, and Molasses and How We Bake with Them**

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The Sweeteners: Sugar, Honey, and Molasses and How We Bake with Them

The Sweeteners—An Introduction

Got a sweet tooth? This chapter is for you. Here we will explore the ways we sweeten our baked goods—from plain granulated sugar to honey. Discover the array of sweeteners available, how to substitute one for another, and how they work in baking. You will also find recipes that rely on these sweeteners.



Sugar is the last of the three cornerstones of baking—flour, butter, and sugar. We'll look at specialty sugars such as turbinado, other sweeteners such as honey, and even dry molasses and dry honey.

Sweeteners do more than just enhance the taste. They can add crunch, decorate, change the structure of cookies and cakes, induce browning, and even retard staling. But let's dig in and learn about these sweeteners.

Types of Sweeteners

Sugars are carbohydrates. To the chemist, sugars refer to a family of compounds with particular molecular structures. Corn syrup and maple syrup are sugars. Sugars can be classified into two types: simple sugars or monosaccharides and complex sugars or disaccharides. Glucose (or dextrose) and fructose are monosaccharides. Sucrose, lactose, and maltose are disaccharides. Why is this important to the baker? Each sugar has a different level of sweetness. Sucrose is what we know as granulated sugar and is less sweet than the glucose and fructose combination in honey.

Sucrose is what we know as granulated sugar, the sugar found in most recipes. Most of us are familiar with granulated sugar so we will list the other sugars in relationship to sucrose.

Fructose, one of the sugars found in honey, is a powerful sweetener. Pure fructose is twice as sweet as sucrose yet has only half the calories.

Fructose has another endearing quality for bakers: it is hygroscopic, that is it attracts moisture rather than dehydrates. Because of this, honey helps products remain fresh and moist.

Lactose, found in milk, has 85% of the sweetness of sucrose. Whole milk contains less than 8% lactose by weight therefore a cup of milk does not contain a great deal of sugar. Adding a cup of milk to your recipe may be the equivalent of adding a tablespoon of sugar.

Glucose is about 75% as sweet as sucrose or granulated sugar. Glucose is found in both honey and the molasses-like syrup that is added to refined sugar to make brown sugar.

Glucose, lactose, and fructose caramelize more easily than sucrose. Because of that, adding honey, milk, or brown sugar to a recipe will create a browner product than will sucrose alone. A loaf of bread made with brown sugar or milk will usually have a deep brown crust when fully baked.

Part 1: The Family of Sweeteners

White Sugars

White sugar is refined to take all of the brown syrup or molasses out of the final product. To the baker, it is our most important group of sugars.

- **Granulated sugar** is the table sugar that we are all familiar with. It is 99% sucrose and is a disaccharide refined from either sugar cane or sugar beets.
- **Superfine sugar, or caster sugar**, is simply granulated sugar ground to a finer texture. Because superfine is composed of smaller crystals, it will dissolve faster. It is used in applications where the sugar needs to dissolve with a minimum of stirring. We like it especially in whipped cream and meringues. It is often used with butter for creaming since with more particles, there are more sharp edges to cut into the butter and create tiny air pockets.
- **Confectioners' or powdered sugar** is pulverized granulated sugar with 3 to 5 percent cornstarch added. If you substitute part of the confectioners' sugar for granulated sugar in a sugar cookie recipe, the added cornstarch will make for a stiffer dough and a cookie that will hold its shape a little better. Confectioners' sugar added to baked meringues will reduce its proclivity to weep. Because it is so fine, it does not cream with butter or shortening to create tiny air pockets as granulated or brown sugar does.

Brown Sugar

Brown sugar is refined sugar with some molasses either left in the sugar from the refining process or added as a syrup. The combination results in a caramel flavor and enough invert sugar to help keep baked goods fresh. Substituting brown sugar for a portion of the granulated sugar in a cookie recipe, adds caramel flavor, increases spread, and creates a cookie that will stay moist longer. Products baked with brown sugar will brown quicker than those baked with granulated sugar.

Turbinado Sugar

Turbinado sugar is an amber-colored sugar manufactured into coarse crystals. It has a little of the caramel flavor of brown sugar. Turbinado sugar makes a wonderful decorative sugar for cookies, cakes, muffins, and pie tops. Our Chocolate Sugarsnap Cookies are topped with turbinado sugar to give them added sweetness and a wonderful crunch.

You can see turbinado sugar in the



accompanying picture.

Decorative Sugars

Decorative sugar, or coarse sugar, is large-grained sugar used as a decorative topping for cakes and cookies. It is also used to create a “crunch” on the top of cookies.

Decorative sugars come in different sizes and colors. The white sugar on the plate to the right is size AA. The red sugar is slightly smaller, a size A. The green sugar is finer yet, a sanding sugar comparable to most of the decorative sugars that we see in the stores. The amber-colored sugar is turbinado. The turbinado that we use is slightly larger than AA.



Honey

Honey is derived from the nectar of flowers and, when commercially produced, heated to kill any yeasts or bacteria, and filtered to remove foreign substances. Each flower type adds its own distinctive flavor and the composition of the honey varies slightly depending on these flower types. When substituting honey for sugar, consider three factors: honey has a distinctive flavor that is imparted to baked goods, honey is 1 1/4 times sweeter than sugar—adjust your recipe accordingly, and because it contains fructose and glucose, it is hygroscopic and will retard staling.

Molasses

Molasses is a by-product of the sugar refining process and can be light or dark depending on the process. Molasses is typically added to baked goods for its strong, distinctive flavor. Because it contains an invert sugar and is not 99% sucrose as granulated sugar is, it attracts moisture and keeps baked goods from drying out.

Dehydrated Honey and Molasses

That's right--honey and molasses can be purchased in a dry form. They are processed with sucrose or dextrose and are not as concentrated as the liquid forms. Since they are composed with real honey and real molasses, they carry the flavors of each.

In the picture, the darker mound is dried molasses and the lighter pile, dried honey. In the center is ordinary sugar.



These are easy and convenient to use.

We use them regularly in bread and cookie mixes. If you make mixes in a jar or mixes for your own use, consider these dried forms of honey or molasses. It also makes a great topping on ice cream, cereals, or dessert.

It's an easy way to use honey or molasses in those recipes that call for sugar. The sweetness of these dried forms approximates sucrose or table sugar and they can be substituted on a one-for-one basis with sugar.

Corn Syrup

While sugar beets and sugar cane have a high sugar content, corn consists primarily of starch and yet corn syrup rivals the sweetness of table sugar. To process corn into something as sweet as sugar, an enzyme is used to convert the starch to sugar. The more complete this conversion is, the sweeter and more viscous is the syrup. Corn syrup is often used in candies and frostings because it won't turn grainy as sugar can.

Part 2: How to Use Sweeteners

The Functions of Sweeteners

Sweeteners change the characteristics of our baked goods. We've identified seven different ways that sweeteners affect our baked goods:

- Moisture retention:

We've already discussed the moisture retaining qualities of brown sugar and molasses. Both honey and corn syrup also have those qualities. Because they are hygroscopic, not only do they help retain moisture in the baked product but they also draw additional moisture from the air. Candies made with hygroscopic sweeteners will draw moisture from the air and may become sticky.

- Browning:

Even a little sugar will help brown cookies as the sugar melts and caramelizes. Because milk contains lactose, a sugar, a little milk in a bread dough improves the crust color. Sweeteners high in fructose or glucose, like honey or corn syrup, brown at a lower temperatures and produce a deeper brown color.

- Tenderness:

Sugar in a bread dough makes for a more tender product. It competes with the proteins for moisture and therefore acts as a shortening. It also interferes with the gelatinization of the starches in the flour. It is one of the reasons that a rich pastry dough is more tender and less chewy than a lean French bread.

- Aeration (Leavening):

When sharp sugar crystals are beaten into shortening, butter, or margarine, air is entrained in the mixture. These tiny air pockets give the batter loft and structure during the baking process. Confectioners' sugar lacks the cutting edges of granulated sugar and does not cream well with butter.

- Spread:

Spread is most often an issue with cookies. As sugars melt they act as liquids and allow the cookie dough to spread. Since brown sugar contains moisture, cookies made with brown sugar tend to spread more than those made with white. Honey, molasses, and corn syrup contribute to spread. Substituting confectioners' sugar for a portion of the granulated sugar in a recipe will decrease spread. (If you do substitute confectioners' sugar for a portion of the sugar, cream the butter with the granulated sugar to create aeration and add the confectioners' sugar with the dry ingredients.)

Sugar also raises the temperature at which eggs coagulate and therefore delays the setting of batters giving them more time to rise and allowing cookie doughs to spread more.

- Fermentation:

Since yeast feeds on sugar more easily than starch, a little sugar speeds up fermentation in a bread dough and makes the dough rise faster. Conversely, too much sugar makes the dough sluggish.

Sugar Cooking: Syrups and Sauces

Knowing how to cook sugar is important for the baker: Many of our desserts, recipes, and even pancakes, call for syrups, creams, and sauces made with cooked sugar.

The techniques of sugar cooking are fairly simple. Stir together sugar and water until the sugar is dissolved. Boil the solution. At this point, you will have a thin syrup. As you continue to cook the solution, water evaporates and the syrups thicken. Soon, all the water is gone and you have nothing but melted sugar.

If you continue to cook melted sugar, the sugar caramelizes and changes color and flavor. As the temperature rises, the sugar further changes. Sugar cooked to a high temperature will be hard and brittle when it is cooled. Many candies are made this way.

Principles for Cooking Sugars

1. Use pure, granulated sugar. Impurities will rise to the surface as scum and should be skimmed off.
2. Don't use more water than what you need. Excess water must be boiled off.
3. Put the extract or liqueur in after cooking. Cooking may reduce the concentration of the added flavor.

Making Candy

You can manage the hardness of the cooled, cooked sugar by managing the temperature of the sugar while cooking. A candy thermometer is the best way to do this though my mother made wonderful candies by dropping a bit of the hot syrup into a little water and testing the hardness of the resulting sugar ball. I remember her tutoring me as we made candies at the "soft ball" and "hard ball" stage. Today, most of us use a thermometer.

The following table will guide you. It shows the minimum temperature, in Fahrenheit degrees, required to reach various hardness stages.

Soft Ball	240
Firm Ball	245
Hard Ball	250
Small Crack	265
Crack	275
Hard Crack	290
Caramel	320

Avoiding Crystallization

The graininess found in some candies and desserts is caused by sugar crystallization in the cooked syrup. A single, tiny, sugar crystal added to the syrup may start a chain reaction that will cause the whole batch to crystallize.

The best way for the home baker to avoid crystallization is to be careful not to add any undissolved sugar crystals to the cooked sugar. Here are some suggestions:

1. Never stir the cooked sugar with anything but a clean utensil. A spoon with a little sugar clinging to it will start crystallization.
2. When the batch first starts to boil, cover the pan with a lid for several minutes. The steam will tend to dissolve any sugar crystals caught on the sides of the pan.
3. Try adding a spoonful of corn syrup to the cooking sugar. Corn syrup has been inverted with a chemical process to prevent crystallization.

Making Syrups and Sweet Sauces

Syrups and sweet or dessert sauces are made by cooking sugar and incorporate the techniques explained above. Directions for making specific syrups and sauces are covered in the next section of this chapter, the recipe section.

The Use of Starch in Sauces

Many sauces use starch to thicken and reduce viscosity. The most common starches are cornstarch and wheat starch, usually in the form of flour. How does this work?

Starches are used to thicken dessert sauces, gravies, soups, and pie fillings. The principles are the same. The thickening doesn't occur until the starch gelatinizes. Gelatinization is the process whereby the starch particles absorb moisture, expand and become firm. This process starts at 140 degrees and is complete when the sauce becomes bubbly. If you quit cooking the sauce before gelatinization is complete, the sauce will not be as thick as it could be. The sauce will thicken further as it cools.

Cornstarch in particular sets up almost like gelatin making it especially valuable for pie fillings. Sauces made with cornstarch are clearer and more translucent than those made with wheat flour since the wheat flour is comprised of more than starch.

Sauces come in an infinite variety of flavors and types. The basic dessert sauce is a mixture of a liquid, a sweetener, a fat, and a starch. (Dinner sauces are similarly constructed without the sweetener.) The sweetener can be sugar, brown sugar, honey, or more. The fat gives a pleasing "mouth feel" to the sauce, usually with butter or cream. The starch can be either corn or wheat flour. Flavors are added from spices and extracts to chocolate.

Not every sauce is made with starch. With enough sugar and cooking, the starch is often omitted. Fruit sauces are often made without starch. They rely on the pectin and solids in the fruit for thickening. Some sauces are thickened with eggs.

The starch must be evenly distributed in the sauce to avoid lumps. There are two basic ways to do this. In most recipes calling for butter, the starch is mixed with the melted butter to form a paste and then the liquid is added all at once and stirred well for distribution. In other recipes, the sugar and starch is well-mixed in the pan before the liquid is added. In either method, frequent stirring is required. A bell-shaped whisk is the preferred way to stir and is an indispensable tool for making sauces.

You do not need a recipe to make a sauce. With just a little practice, you can make whatever sauces fit your needs.

Substituting Sugar and Honey

So you want to use honey instead of sugar in that favorite recipe? The following guidelines will help you successfully make that substitution as well as substitute sugar for honey in a recipe.

- Honey is 1 1/4 times sweeter than sugar so you will want to use less honey in a recipe than sugar. If you want to replace the sugar in the recipe with honey, use 3/4 cup of honey plus one tablespoon for each cup of sugar called for. Conversely, use 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar for each cup of honey called for.
- Since honey is about 15% water, you will need to reduce the amount of liquid called for in the recipe when you use honey in place of sugar. For each cup of honey, reduce the liquids by 2 1/2 tablespoons.

Using Honey in Yeasted Breads

Honey lends itself well to yeasted breads. Your bread will have a wonderful flavor and because honey is hygroscopic, the bread will stay moist and fresh longer.

You can substitute honey for sugar in almost any bread recipe. Remember that honey is 1 1/4 times sweeter than sugar and you may choose to reduce the amount of honey used slightly.

It is a little trickier to substitute honey in bread machine recipes. In the bread machine, the dough must rise to an optimal level when the baking starts. Breads made with honey tend to rise a little faster so you may need to make adjustments for that perfect loaf. If your dough rises too quickly, you can slow down the rise in the next batch by reducing the liquid by a tablespoon or adding a little salt.



Decorating Cookies with Sugar

Often you will decorate cookies with sugar products. The holiday cookies that you make and sprinkle with colored sugar crystals is one way. The cookies can be sprinkled with sugar before placing them in the oven or, if the cookies are frosted, you can top the frosting with sprinkles. There are other ways to decorate cookies:



- Rolling cookie dough balls in large sugar crystals or turbinado sugar. When the cookies bake, the crystals are imbedded in the top of the cookie. The large crystals add a delightful crunch to the cookies.
- Rolling cookie dough balls, especially chocolate cookies, in powdered sugar before baking leaves an intriguing splotched affect. Some cookies, such as wedding cookies, are dusted with powdered sugar after baking.
- You can also decorate the edges of cookies with sugar, decorations, or nuts. Since this method is not well known, it is explained in detail in this section.

How to Decorate the Edges of a Cookie

It's fun to decorate the edges of a cookie; you can do that with refrigerator cookies.

Cookies with minimal spread work best for decorating. Look for recipes that have a higher flour to sugar ratio or for those without leavening, for best results. (Refrigerator cookies with a high sugar content are usually light and crisp because the sugar in the dough melts in the heat of the oven. Cookies without leavening tend to be rich and shortbread-like but decorate nicely. Festive Fruit and Oat Cookies and Coconut Cranberry Cookies--the recipes for which are found on our site--are perfect for edge decorating.)



Use large, colored, sugar crystals, turbinado sugar, decorating sprinkles, decorating jimmies, crushed candies, or nuts. Simply roll the log of dough in the decorating materials prior to slicing the cookies. If you roll the log with the sugar or other

decorations in waxed paper or parchment paper, you can press them into the surface of the dough.

Some instructors use an egg white wash to assure that the candies stick to the log. Except for with nuts, we don't find it necessary and the moisture from the egg white tends to melt the candies or sugar crystals into a blurry mess.



To showcase the edges, we usually cut the slices just a bit thicker before baking. We color white sugar crystals any color we like by mixing a few drops of food coloring with the crystals. You can buy large bags of white crystals to make a collection of different colors.

Turbinado is an excellent coating sugar with its amber color and large crystals.

Topping Muffins and Quick Breads with Sugar

You can top most baked goods with sugar by brushing on a little milk or butter with a pastry brush and sprinkling the tops just before baking. Brush the tops sparingly; too much moisture will dissolve finer sugar crystals.



If the dough or batter is moist enough, the sugar may stick to the top without brushing.

Cookie Decorating Tips

- Let your cookies cool completely before decorating. If the cookie is not completely cool, the frosting will trap moisture and the cookie will sweat.
- Decorating sugar is graded by size with AA being the most popular large crystal size. It's easiest to buy in white. That's okay. Put some white crystals in a bowl,

add a drop or two of food coloring, stir, and you have colored sugar crystals. There's no need to stock a rainbow of colors. You can purchase AA sugar crystals on our site.



- Turbinado sugar is made of large crystals and is amber in color. We love it. It is less expensive than white decorating sugar. Consider turbinado where the amber color is not a problem. You can purchase turbinado sugar on our site.
- For firmer icing that will not spread and smear, use a recipe that calls for egg whites or use meringue powder. A couple tablespoons of meringue powder will firm up the icing nicely. You can purchase meringue powder on our site.
- Frosting, especially with meringue powder, dries quickly. Place a damp paper towel over each bowl of frosting that you are not using.
- Don't have a piping bag? You can make do with a heavy plastic bag. Just snip a tiny corner of the bag and squeeze the frosting through the clipped corner.
- How do you get those nice, neat edges on frosted cookies? Use a fine tip with your icing set and pipe a border around the edge of the cookies. Let the frosting set. It helps to have a frosting that sets fairly hard, with egg whites or meringue powder. Then spread frosting between the piped edges.
- You can put food coloring right in the dough to make colored cookies. After baking, the color will not be as intense as it was in the raw dough.

Part 3: Recipes with Sweeteners

Basic Syrups (with Recipes)

Simple syrups are made with sugar and water and with or without flavoring. Flavorings can consist of extracts, liqueurs, and fruit juices. These are used for dessert and pancake syrups and are often used in recipes. How much water is used is a matter of preference. We have often used two cups of sugar for one cup of water. There is no reason to use more water than necessary; it simply must be boiled off.

How to Make Basic Syrups

1. Measure the sugar and water into a clean saucepan.
2. Over medium heat, stir and cook until the sugar is dissolved and the solution comes to a boil.
3. Remove any scum. Store in a covered container.

Homemade Maple Syrup

We take this camping with us—no fuss and no mess from a leaky syrup container. It works great for backpacking.

Ingredients:

2 cups granulated sugar
1 cup water
1 teaspoon maple flavor

Directions:

Add the sugar and water to a saucepan. Stir and cook until the syrup reaches a full boil. Remove from the heat and add the flavor. Serve hot.

When we go backpacking, we bag the sugar and add the flavor to the sugar. It saves trying to carry a liquid flavor on the trail.

Vanilla Syrup

Make as per the instructions for Maple Syrup. Instead of maple flavoring, use vanilla extract. Since your vanilla extract may not be as pronounced as maple, you may wish to use more extract.

This is a good syrup to use with strawberries over shortcake.

Cinnamon Vanilla Syrup

Add a teaspoon of good quality cinnamon to your Vanilla Syrup.

Chocolate Syrup

This is easy to make and fun to experiment with. Since it is fat free, it does not have the consistency and “mouth feel” of a sauce. It’s a great addition to a summertime slush, makes great chocolate milk for the kids, and can be used on ice cream or desserts.

Ingredients:

2 cups granulated sugar
1 cup water
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup cocoa

Directions:

Add the sugar and water to a saucepan. Stir and cook until the syrup reaches a full boil. Remove from the heat.

Add the cocoa a little at a time, whisking steadily as you add the powder. Press the hot syrup through a fine strainer. Add the extract. After sitting for a few minutes, you are likely to have a scum on the top. Skim it off. Cover and store in the refrigerator.

Chocolate Banana Smoothie

This is a quick, easy, three-ingredient smoothie. It is low-fat and refreshing. (It’s also a great thing to do with those extra bananas before they get too ripe.)

Ingredients:

1 ripe banana
8 to 12 ice cubes
3 or 4 tablespoons of chocolate syrup, to taste (see recipe)

Directions:

Mix ingredients in a food blender.

Basic Sauces (with Recipes)

The mastery of sauces is essential to the desserts that you bake.

What's the difference between a dessert sauce and a syrup? Most but not all sauces contain fat either from butter or cream. They are thicker than syrups, often thickened with cornstarch but sometimes with egg yolks and occasionally with flour.

Except for a thickening agent, sauces are prepared much like syrups. In part 2 of this chapter, we covered the techniques for sugar cooking. Review that section if needed.

Also in part 2, is a section about making sauces with starch in them. You may want to review that section also.

In this section of the chapter, we will show you how to make both a caramel sauce and a chocolate sauce. There are many recipes for these sauces but these are very nice renditions. The chocolate sauce is made without cream and so is not as rich as ganache and many chocolate sauces. The caramel sauce is made by cooking the sugar and then adding hot cream. It has a touch of lemon to add acidity to the mixture and reduce the chances for crystallization.

New England Chocolate Sauce

This is an example of a cooked sugar sauce with corn syrup added to reduce the chances of crystallization.

Ingredients:

2 cups sugar
1 cup water
2 tablespoons corn syrup

3 ounces unsweetened baker's chocolate (for a very dark sauce, use 4 ounces)
4 tablespoons butter

Directions

1. Measure the sugar and water into a clean saucepan.
2. Over medium heat, stir and cook until the sugar is dissolved and the solution comes to a boil. Cook for one minute.
3. Melt the chocolate and butter in the microwave in a medium bowl.
4. Very slowly hot syrup into the chocolate mixture. Pour the chocolate sauce back into the saucepan.
5. Bring the sauce back to a boil. After it reaches the boiling point, cook for four more minutes. Let cool.

Store in a covered container in the refrigerator.

Supreme Caramel Sauce

This is a very good caramel sauce. Lemon juice is added to make the cooked sugar more acidic. A more acidic syrup is less prone to crystallization.

Ingredients:

2 cups sugar
1/4 cup water
1/2 tablespoon lemon juice (lemon juice from concentrate is okay)

1 1/2 cup whipping cream
milk as needed

Directions

1. Measure the sugar and water into a clean saucepan. Add the lemon juice.
2. Over medium heat, stir and cook until the sugar is dissolved and the solution comes to a boil. Cook the syrup over very low heat until the sugar begins to caramelize. It will turn a golden color. If you cook it too long, it will turn dark. Set aside and let cool for six minutes.
3. In another pan, heat the cream until it boils. Pour about one-third of a cup of the cream into the caramel, stirring as you pour. Add the remaining cream slowly, stirring as it is added.
4. Place the pan back on the hot stove and stir the sauce as it heats until the caramel is dissolved. As soon as the caramel is dissolved in the hot cream, set it aside and let cool completely.
5. Add enough milk to dilute the sauce to the desired consistency.

Store in a covered container in the refrigerator.

Supreme Butterscotch Sauce

Prepare as for caramel sauce only use brown sugar instead of granulated white sugar.

Pecan Pancakes with Butter Pecan Syrup

I spent two years in the South and learned to love all things pecan—especially the great pecan pie that the Southerners bake. This is a thinly veiled attempt to enjoy that same flavor for breakfast.

Pecan Pancakes

These pancakes are made with a mix. You can use your favorite recipe if you prefer and add the nuts, spices, and extract.

Ingredients:

2 cups dry pancake mix
1/2 cup finely chopped pecans
1 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
For the oil called for in the mix, use melted butter
Water and egg as called for in the mix directions

Directions:

1. In a small bowl, mix the nuts, spices, and extract together until the nuts are covered with spices.
2. Prepared the pancake mix as directed on the package.
3. Stir in the nut mixture, stirring no more than needed.
4. Cook per the directions on the package.

Butter Pecan Syrup

With corn syrup added, this is nearly foolproof. The corn syrup will almost eliminate the chances for crystallization.

For thicker syrup, cook the syrup until the water is boiled off.

Ingredients:

2 cup granulated sugar
2/3 cups water
1/3 cup dark corn syrup
4 tablespoons butter

2 teaspoons vanilla extract or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and 1 teaspoon rum extract
1/2 cup finely chopped pecans

Directions:

1. Mix the sugar, water and corn syrup together in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring as needed. Cook for five minutes over medium heat for thicker syrup.
2. Add the butter, extract, and nuts and stir. Serve hot.

Autumn Apple Pancakes with Walnut Caramel Syrup

This is like eating a caramel apple for breakfast—tender pancakes smothered in apples with a buttery, caramel syrup. Though this makes an elegant looking dish, it is really quite easy to put together. The apple slices are cooked in the syrup and piled on the pancakes.



This recipe is sweet enough to work well for brunch. Top it with whipped cream for a quick and unusual dessert.

This apple and syrup mixture also works well as a topping for ice cream sundaes.

Autumn Apple Pancakes

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 large eggs
4 tablespoons melted butter or oil
2 cups buttermilk
additional water if required

Pancake Directions:

1. Mix the dry ingredients together in a large bowl.
2. Mix the egg, butter, and buttermilk together in a small bowl. Make a depression in the dry ingredients and add the liquid mixture. Stir until moistened—some lumps will remain. Add more water to get the right consistency, if required. Do not over mix.
3. Pour about 1/3 cup of batter onto a hot, lightly greased griddle. Cook for about two minutes on medium heat or until the edges are set and the bubbles remain open. Turn over and cook on the other side.

Walnut Caramel Syrup

Ingredients

2 or 3 medium cooking apples
4 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1 tablespoon cornstarch
2/3 cup brown sugar
1 cup water
1/3 cup walnut pieces

Topping Directions:

1. Peel, core, and thinly slice the apples. Set aside.
2. In a large saucepan, melt the butter over low heat. Stir in the spices, cornstarch and brown sugar all at once. Immediately add the water and stir until the sugar is dissolved.
3. Add the apples and cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the apples are nearly tender and the syrup is bubbly. While the apples are cooking, mix the pancakes.

Note: If you would like a thinner syrup, simply add a little more water.

Serve the pancakes hot topped with the cooked apples and syrup.

Peach Melba on Gingerbread Pancakes

Peach Melba—peaches and raspberries in a sugar syrup—matches wonderfully with these gingerbread pancakes. A generous dollop of whipped cream is the perfect complement.



Peach Melba Recipe

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups frozen peach slices
3/4 cup granulated sugar
water
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 1/2 cups individually frozen raspberries
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Directions:

1. In a microwavable bowl, thaw the peaches in the microwave. Drain off the juices from the peaches into a measuring cup. Add enough water to have 1/2 cup liquid.
2. In a medium saucepan, mix the juice with the sugar and cornstarch. Cook over medium heat until the mixture has thickened and turned translucent.
3. Add the peaches, raspberries, and vanilla to the saucepan. Stir until combined.

Gingerbread Pancakes Recipe

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/3 cup molasses crystals
2 large eggs
1 cup sour cream
1/4 cup melted butter
1 cup milk (plus more as needed for the right consistency—about 1 1/2 cups)

Note: Instead of molasses crystals, you may use liquid molasses. Do not use blackstrap or other strong-tasting molasses.

Directions:

1. In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and spices until well-dispersed.
2. In a large bowl, mix the molasses, eggs, sour cream, melted butter, and milk. Let the mixture sit for a minute to soften the molasses crystals and then stir until they are dissolved.
3. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and stir until the two are just combined, adding more milk if needed. Some lumps will remain.
4. Cook on a very hot griddle. Serve hot topped with peach melba and whipped cream.

Golden California Raisin Bread

This bread is delightful. It is made with honey, golden raisins, and a bit of orange. Orange complements the intensity of raisins very well. The orange juice also gives the bread a bit of acidity which helps the yeast. This bread is made with white rye flour. You can substitute medium rye though we prefer the white rye.



This recipe has so many things to love. We love the taste of raisins and orange together. And we're particularly partial to golden raisins. We also love white rye flour. It's mild and has an almost sourdough-like taste. All in all, we're pretty proud of this bread.

If you are having trouble finding white rye flour, medium rye will work. Better yet, try our white rye flour blend and use that in place of both the rye and bread flours. If you use our blend, it will have the right ratio of rye and bread flours along with extra gluten and dough conditioners to make a great bread.

Golden California Raisin Bread Recipe

Ingredients:

zest from one orange

about 3/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice

1 cup whole milk or one cup reduced fat milk and one tablespoon butter

about 1/4 cup warm water

1/2 cup honey

1 seven gram package instant yeast

2 cups white rye flour

about 4 cups high protein bread flour

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon cinnamon

2 1/2 cups golden raisins

Directions:

1. Grate the zest from one orange being careful not to get the bitter, white pithy layer. Set the zest aside.

2. Squeeze the orange juice from one or two oranges until you have about 3/4 cup. Mix the orange juice with the milk and water. You should have 2 1/4 cups of liquid mixture. Add the honey. Heat the liquid mixture in the microwave until it reaches 105 degrees.
3. Place the rye flour and yeast in the bowl of your stand-type mixer. Add the warm liquid mixture and beat with a dough hook until it is partially mixed—about 30 seconds. The purpose of this mixing is to hydrate the yeast.
4. Add most of the bread flour to the bowl. Add the salt, cinnamon, and orange zest. Knead with the dough hook at medium speed for four minutes adding more flour to reach a soft but not sticky dough. Add the raisins and knead them in. (You may need to knead the raisins in by hand.) Set the dough in a greased bowl, turn once, and cover. Set the bowl in a warm place and allow it to double in size.
5. Grease two 8 1/2" x 4 1/2" loaf pans. Form two loaves, cover them, and let them rise until doubled and puffy.

Bakers Note: *This bread is very good. The key is to let it rise enough. The yeast has to lift a lot of raisins and the bread has a high rye content and it just takes a while. Be patient. If there is a second key, it's to use quality golden raisins. They should be soft and plump.*

6. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until done. The internal temperature should be 190 to 200 degrees. Remove the bread from the pans and let the bread cool on a wire rack.

Bakers Note: *Whole milk has an enzyme which retards the growth of yeast. We recommend that you use Bakers Dry Milk, high heat treated dry milk, for this recipe, though liquid milk will still make an excellent bread.*

Peanut Butter and Honey Cookies

This is a kid's recipe. But then, if you like peanut butter, you'll like these cookies.

This is one of our favorite peanut butter cookie recipes. The recipe calls for size AA white but you can use turbinado just as well. We included this recipe to give you a chance to work with large-crystal sugar.



Peanut Butter and Honey Cookie Recipe

Salted peanuts are so good, those roasted peanuts that we all love to snack on. Some time ago, we discovered that we could add them to peanut butter cookies for a much better cookie. Now we've added honey and some crunchy sugar.

Can peanut butter cookies get any better?

Ingredients:

- 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup shortening
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped roasted snack peanuts

- 3/4 cup turbinado or size AA sugar crystals

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. In a medium bowl, mix the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together.
2. Mix the butter, shortening, peanut butter, and honey together with the paddle attachment and your stand-type mixer. Add the egg and beat until fluffy, six to

eight minutes. Beat in the vanilla, granulated sugar, and peanuts. Refrigerate the dough for about an hour.

3. Form golf-ball sized balls of dough. Roll each in the sugar crystals until they are generously coated. Place them on ungreased baking sheets. Press each down with the tines of fork, leaving a crosshatch pattern and cookies that are at least 3/8 inch thick.
4. Bake for ten to eleven minutes or until the cookies just start to brown. Cool on wire racks.

Cinnamon Banana Breakfast Cakes

These are fun little breakfast cakes to make. They are just a little sweeter and richer than most muffin recipes but not much different than most commercial muffin products. The double serving of bananas and the sugar topping make these a wonderful treat that works well for breakfast or brunch.



These can be made in almost any shaped pans. Large muffin tins, small loaf pans, or mini bundt pans are ideal.

This is a great glorified muffin. It is made like banana bread, topped with sliced bananas, brushed with butter, and then covered with sugar.

Initially, we made these breakfast cakes in large muffin tins and sprinkled them with cinnamon and sugar. Topping them with turbinado sugar gives them crunch. These can also be made in small loaf pans.

Ingredients:

1 cup butter
1 cup sugar
2 large eggs
1 1/2 cups mashed ripe bananas (about three large)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2/3 cup buttermilk
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
bananas for slicing
2 tablespoons melted butter for brushing on the cake tops
a mixture of three tablespoons sugar and two teaspoons cinnamon for sprinkling or 1/4 cup turbinado or size AA sugar crystals

Directions:

Prepare some baking molds by greasing well and flouring the bottoms or by lining with parchment paper. Large muffin tins work well. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. Cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and continue beating. Add the bananas, vanilla, and buttermilk.

2. In another bowl, mix the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and cinnamon together.
3. Add the flour mixture to the butter-banana mixture and fold in.
4. Spoon the batter into the prepared molds.
5. Slice the bananas and arrange them on top of the dough. Use as many slices as desired. (Remember, the dough will expand in the oven while the banana slices will tend to become smaller.)
6. Brush the tops with the melted butter and then sprinkle them with the cinnamon-sugar mixture or sugar crystals.
7. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes depending on the size of the baking molds. A toothpick inserted in the center of the cake should come out clean. Cool on wire racks.