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Roasted Pear Maple Pecan Crisp with Maple Yogurt

Naturally Delicious Recipes • Janice Feuer-Haugen

It's What's for Dessert This Holiday Season!

Consider a luscious, roasted pear dessert for your holiday table. Easily-prepared *Roasted Pear Maple Pecan Crisp* comes together in 15 minutes. It then bakes unattended for about 40 minutes. With most holiday dishes requiring organization and concentration, what a treat to have a light and lovely dessert with so little effort.

Presentation's Everything

The transformation of the traditional fruit crisp into more sophisticated holiday fare retains all that we love about fruit crisps, from the crispy topping to the tender fruit.

Imagine a roasted pear half atop a swirl of maple yogurt. The pear is filled with golden brown, crisp, chunky and gently spiced Maple Pecan Topping. And, it's all embellished with a sprinkling of ruby red pomegranate seeds (arils) for both striking color and complexity of flavor.

Choosing and Ripening Pears

Choosing pears is easy. Look for firm, unblemished pears. Great choices are deep golden, boldly flavored Bosc pears, sweet and juicy red or green Bartletts and even juicier bell-shaped D'Anjou pears.

According to the Environmental Working Group's (EWG) 2021 Shoppers Guide to Pesticides in Produce, pears are number nine in their list of the Dirty Dozen. So, whenever possible, choose organic pears.

"There are only ten minutes in the life of a pear when it is perfect to eat."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



Perhaps the most difficult part of cooking with pears is timing: waiting for them to be slightly underripe to just ripe on the day you want to roast them. This can be tricky. I've left pears on the kitchen counter for ten days before they began to soften at their stem end. Other times, they were ready in less than a week.

To test a pear for ripeness: use your thumb to gently press the top of the pear near its stem. A ripe pear gives slightly to the pressure. Once it does, enjoy the pear immediately or store it in the refrigerator for up to a few days until you're ready to roast.

A Quick Trick

Try this paper-bag trick to speed up the pear-ripening process. Place pears in a brown paper bag with a ripe banana and/or an apple. Both bananas and apples give off ethylene gas, a fruit ripening chemical. Tightly close the bag and store it at room temperature. Be sure to open the bag and check the pears at least every other day.

A Cautionary Note: pears ripen from the inside out. Store them too long, and they'll become soft, discolored and mushy at their core. Unusable, actually, and very disappointing.

Recipe on next page...

Roasted Pear Maple Pecan Crisp

☞ Gluten-free and easily made dairy-free and vegan as well. Substitute Whipped Coconut Cream for the yogurt, and chilled coconut oil for the butter.

☞ The variation in baking time depends upon the ripeness of your pears. And the amount of topping you'll need, depends upon their size. Extra topping can be frozen or baked on its own as a crispy addition to your morning yogurt.

☞ Fresh blueberries or blackberries make a good stand-in for pomegranate seeds.

☞ Thank you, USA Pears, for inspiring this recipe.

Makes 4 servings

Active time: 15 minutes

Total time: about one hour

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons pecans or walnuts
- 3 tablespoons brown rice flour
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon pure maple syrup
- 1-ounce butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
- ¼ cup rolled oats
- 2 firm, slightly underripe to just-ripe pears
- ½ cup plain, whole milk yogurt
- 2 teaspoons pure maple syrup
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds (arils)

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INSTRUCTIONS

1) Prepare the Crisp Topping:

Heat the oven to 325 degrees. Lightly toast the pecans for 7 minutes. Set aside to cool. Raise the oven temperature to 375 degrees.

2) Use a food processor and the pulse button to combine the rice flour, maple syrup and spices until just mixed. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the processor bowl with a spatula. Add the cold butter and pulse until it becomes the size of peas and the mixture begins to stick together.

3) Add the oats and pecans. Use the pulse button to roughly chop them so that the topping remains quite chunky.

4) Cut each of the pears in half from stem to flower end.

Use the tip of a paring knife to completely remove the core and stem. If you would like, leave the part of the stem that sticks out from the pear in one of the cut halves.

5) Place the pear halves cut side up in a baking dish. Fill the core and much of the top of each pear with the Crisp Topping.

6) Bake the pears on the oven's middle shelf at 375 degrees for about 35-45 minutes, or until

the topping has browned and the pear halves are easily pierced with the tip of a paring knife. **Note:** If the pear halves are tender before the topping has browned, place the pears under the broiler on high for a minute or so.

7) **Prepare the Maple Yogurt:** While the pears are roasting, use a fork or a whisk to combine the plain yogurt with the maple syrup. Set aside.

8) Serve each pear half on a large swirl of Maple Yogurt. Then, garnish each roasted pear half with a sprinkling of pomegranate seeds. ■

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