

Revel in Chocolate Desserts Resonating with Passover Themes

By Deborah R. Prinz

(JTA) - Toss the potato starch and matzah meal - serve delectable desserts this Passover made from chocolate.

These desserts, especially if using fair trade or organic chocolate, further awareness of the themes of Passover. They remind us of the great poverty of many cacao farmers and of the children tragically enslaved in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

Chocolate Charoset Truffles

This is a great combination of chocolate and charoset, the Passover fruit concoction representing the building of granaries by the Hebrew slaves. If you are using left over made Ashkenazi style, you may want to drain the excess wine/grape juice.

Ingredients:

3 pounds dark or bittersweet chocolate, broken into pieces
1/4 c. pistachios
1/4 c. pecans
1/8 c. almonds
1/8 c. pine nuts
1/2 tart apple
1/4 navel orange, with rind
A few drops of sweet white wine
A few drops of honey
Pinch of fresh or ground ginger (or to taste)
Pinch of ground cinnamon (or to taste)

Preparation:

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or waxed paper. Grind the nuts, apples, and orange separately in a food processor.

The nuts should be as close to a powder as possible without becoming "butter." Combine the nuts, apple, orange, wine, honey, ginger and cinnamon in a bowl, mixing well. The charoset filling should have a smooth, thick texture. Roll the charoset into 1" balls. Melt the chocolate in a large heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water; remove from the heat. Using two forks, dip the balls into the melted chocolate and place on the prepared baking sheet; refrigerate till the chocolate has set.

Quantity: 24 truffles

Forgotten Cookies

These delicacies stay in the oven overnight, but they are not easily forgotten when you taste them.

Ingredients:

2 lg. egg whites
2/3 c. sugar
1 c. chocolate chips, cocoa nibs, or both
1 c. pecans, coarsely chopped
Pinch of salt (optional)
1 t. vanilla extract
30-40 chocolate buds or kisses

Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 or 3 baking sheets with parchment paper or aluminum foil. Beat the egg whites till foamy. Gradually add the sugar and beat till stiff. Gently fold in the chocolate chips and/or cocoa nibs, and nuts. Add the salt and vanilla. Drop teaspoonfuls onto the prepared baking sheets.

Cap each cookie with a chocolate bud or kiss. Place the pans in the oven; after about 1 min. turn off the heat. Leave in the oven for several hours or overnight. Carefully peel the cookies off the paper or foil using a spatula.

Quantity: About 35 cookies

Wake Up Chocolate Chunks

These delicacies wake us up to Passover's messages of freedom and conscience.

Ingredients:

1 lb. dark chocolate, chips or broken into pieces
1 c. almonds
1/2 c. raisins, dates, or other dried fruit
1/8 c. coffee beans
2 t. cayenne pepper, to taste
1/2 c. unsweetened cocoa powder
Matazah meal (optional)

Preparation:

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper, aluminum foil, or waxed paper. Melt the chocolate in a lg. heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water; remove from the heat. In a food processor with the chop blade, combine the almonds, raisins, coffee beans, and cayenne. Pulse till coarsely chopped. Stir the cocoa into the melted chocolate. Once the mixture is even and getting stiff, add the chopped nuts and fruits; keep stirring. Taste to check the spice level. If the mixture is too moist and sticky, add more nuts or matzah meal, or wait till firm enough to handle. (Cooling



in the refrigerator will firm the mixture faster.) Roll the mixture into balls and place on the prepared baking sheet. Cool completely. Remove from the baking sheet and store in a covered container.

Quantity: Approximately 20 chunks

Cocoa Nibs Citrus Salad

Cocoa nibs harken back to the most basic form of the cocoa bean and may be the healthiest form of eating chocolate. Nibble on this salad as a snack, part of the meal or a dessert.

Ingredients:

1 grapefruit, peeled (membrane removed, optional)
2 navel oranges, peeled
3 blood oranges, peeled
4 clementines, peeled
Pomegranate syrup (optional)
Several tablespoons cocoa nibs (try your local health food store or online)

Pistachios, roasted and chopped

Preparation:

Cut the fruit into bite-size

pieces and place in a lg. serving bowl, preferably glass. Add the pomegranate syrup to taste. When ready to serve, sprinkle the cocoa nibs and roasted pistachios over the fruit salad.

Chocolate Matzah Brickel

Ingredients:

2 lbs. dark chocolate, chips or broken into pieces
1/4 c. vegetable oil
1/2 to 1 t. vanilla extract or almond extract
1 box matzah sheets, broken into quarters
1 c. nuts, chopped
1 c. dried fruits, chopped

Preparation:

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or waxed paper. Melt the chocolate in a large heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Once melted, thin the chocolate with the vegetable oil; stir in the vanilla or almond extract. Coat the matzah, nuts and dried fruits with the chocolate and spread onto the prepared baking sheet. Place the sheet in the refrigerator for at least 1/2 hr. to cool. Once cool and hardened, remove from the pan and break into bite-size bits. Store in a closed container.

Quantity: 10 servings

Rabbi Deborah R. Prinz is the author of "On the Chocolate Trail: A Delicious Adventure Connecting Jews, Religions, History, Travel, Rituals and Recipes to the Magic of Cacao" (Jewish Lights).

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