

Plums give a fresh taste to a classic crisp

ALISON LADMAN

Associated Press

When we think of winter desserts, we often think of spiced flavors and butter-laden richness.

But while that butter may bring comfort at the end of a chilly winter day, it also adds tons of unnecessary fat and calories. But winter treats don't need to put a chill on healthy eating.

A good place to start when looking for more healthful desserts is fruit, which not only packs plenty of its own no-added-sugar sweetness, it also tends to have gobs of fiber and nutrients.

For this dessert, we chose tangy citrus and sweet plums. Plums naturally caramelize beautifully, adding deep flavor to the dish. To complement the fruit and bring out its natural sweetness, we add just a touch of honey.

Everybody likes a good spiced crisp topping, but nutritionally it often doesn't add up. Crisp topping usually makes a good start with healthy fiber-rich oats, but goes downhill with a pile of sugar and butter. To remake this topping, we stayed true to its oat roots, but added a handful of healthy-fat almonds, a generous dose of spices and a touch of honey.

For a creamy topping we opted for a spoonful of fat-free plain Greek-style yogurt. It adds the creamy dairy mouth feel that whipped cream offers, but with no added fat and a great serving of calcium. We sweetened it up just a touch with honey and a couple drops of almond extract.

Don't be intimidated by the number of ingredients in this recipe. It comes together quickly and most of it is done right on the stove.

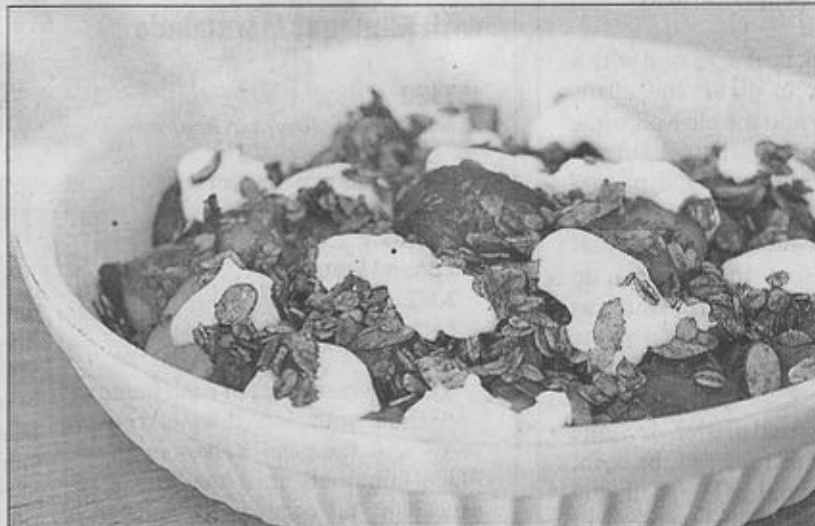
Spiced Plum Crisp

Start to finish: 30 minutes.

Servings: 6.

For the crisp topping:

1/2 tsp. cinnamon



A Spiced Plum Crisp dish. A good place to start when looking for more healthy desserts is fruit, which not only packs plenty of its own no-added-sugar sweetness, it also tends to have gobs of fiber and nutrients. AP

1/4 tsp. ground ginger
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/8 tsp. ground cloves
1/8 tsp. allspice
Pinch salt
1 tablespoon canola oil
1 tablespoon honey
3/4 cup rolled oats
1/4 cup sliced almonds

For the yogurt topping:
5.3-ounce container plain fat-free Greek yogurt
1 teaspoon honey
Several drops almond extract

For the plums:
6 plums, quartered and pitted
2 Tbsp. honey
2 Tbsp. water
Pinch salt
1/2 tsp. lemon zest
1/2 tsp. orange zest
Juice of 1 lemon
Juice of 1 orange
1 Tbsp. cornstarch

Heat the oven to 400 F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a small bowl, whisk together the cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, salt, oil and honey. Add the oats and almonds, then toss to coat evenly. Spread the mixture evenly over the prepared baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes, or until golden brown and crisp, stirring once or twice.

Meanwhile, make the yogurt topping. In a small bowl, stir together the yogurt, honey and almond extract. Set aside.

In a large skillet, combine the plums, honey, water, salt, lemon zest and orange zest. Heat over medium, stirring occasionally, until the plums are just softened, about 10 minutes.

In a small bowl, combine the lemon juice, orange juice and cornstarch. Stir into the plums and bring up to a simmer for 1 minute, or until the juices are thickened.

Spoon the warm plums into individual bowls, topping each with some of the crisp topping and a spoonful of the yogurt topping. Serve immediately.

The Food Page

virgin olive oil
lemon juice
black pepper, to taste

owl, beat eggs well with a
stir in garlic and citrus
ly add the olive oil while
stantly until it is light and
n with salt and pepper

ne blood orange so that
esh of the orange — no
with a sharp knife, as
ible. Place on a paper
it absorbs some of the

n-sized platter, decorate
os or rock salt, or both.
sel out of the shell, and
ately half a teaspoon of
place your mussel back
top of it. Then lay one
od orange (carpaccio) on
sel. Put just a little tiny
oli on top of the carpac-
nkle with fresh thinly
rrange on your platter.
ve you one of these per-
Napa Valley Academy
n Sunday, Feb. 26. It's an
and your ticket pur-
huge difference to the

Mediterranean Spice-Dusted Duck Breast with Kumquat Marmalade

JEFF JAKE

Executive chef, Silverado Resort

Serves 2 as a main course.

For marmalade:
1 pound kumquats
2 1/2 cups sugar
1 star anise

Cut off green stem of each kumquat and then split lengthwise; remove seeds and then cut halves in thirds. Place kumquats in a medium-sized saucepan and cover with water. Add sugar and star anise and bring to a boil, removing the white foam from the surface. Cook over high heat for approximately 10 minutes and reduce heat. When the kumquat mix becomes jammy in texture, remove and cool. Remove star anise and reserve.

For spice mix:
1 cup coriander seeds
1 cup caraway seeds
1 cup cumin seeds
1 cup anise seeds
1/4 cup black peppercorns

Lightly toast all seeds, grind separately and then mix powders together. Store in airtight container.

For duck breast:
Two 8-ounce duck breasts
1/2 Tbsp. sea salt
2 Tbsp. Mediterranean spice mix (above)
3 Tbsp. grapeseed oil.

Rinse and dry duck breasts. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Season duck breasts with salt and spice mix 30 minutes before cooking. Heat grapeseed oil in a medium sauté pan over medium heat. Place duck breasts in the pan, skin side down, and brown the skin about 4 minutes. Turn duck over, cook for 2 minutes and then place pan containing the breasts in oven. Roast for another 6 to 8 minutes. Pull duck from oven and place on roasting rack to drain and rest for 6 minutes before slicing.

Slice duck in 6 to 8 thin slices across breast. Place a tablespoon of marmalade in the center of a warm plate and arrange duck slices in an overlapping pattern. Sprinkle a little more spice dust on the finished breasts and garnish with watercress tossed with a drizzle of good aged sherry vinegar.

vinaigrette, walnuts and
Parmigiano-Reggiano
cheese.

• Pearl — New Orleans
mini-muffaletta, Pearl
style, the sandwich of the
Big Easy with ham, Genoa
salami, provolone, moz-
zarella and chopped olive
salad on foccacia.

• Robert Mondavi Win-
ery — Chef Mosher is serv-
ing seared Loch Dart
salmon with raita and pap-
padam, plus red wine
risotto with beef short ribs
and crispy shallots.

• Silverado Resort —

