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Easter treats

Easter can be a tricky time if you're trying to keep yourself and your family on a healthy diet. But with a little help from your health store, it is possible to prepare a range of delicious, nutritious treats.

With Easter upon us, the supermarket shelves are crammed full of chocolate eggs, chicks, bunnies and an endless number of sugary sweets and cakes. But before you ditch your New Year resolutions or attempt to tackle hyperactive children gorging on a mountain of chocolate, why not try an alternative approach this year?

It is possible to create some scrummy treats that are considerably healthier than supermarket options. Take a trip to your local health shop and stock up on a range of nutritious ingredients to use for some delicious home baking.

For most of us, Easter means chocolate but this year make your options healthier. Choose brands with a higher percentage of cocoa solids or use raw unprocessed cacao powder and nibs. Cacao nibs

have some nutritional good points. For example, it is a good source of folic acid, copper, potassium and magnesium. Chocolate is also rich in protective antioxidants including flavonoids, and heart-protecting polyphenols, especially in flavone form.

If you suspect you or your child may be allergic to chocolate it could be due to the additives such as soy lecithin or dairy so select free-from brands instead. Cashew is also a healthy alternative and is available in bar- and powder form, making it an easy substitute in recipes.

Spring is the perfect time to get baking but keep it nutritious by using natural low-GI sweeteners such as xylitol and add additional fibre, healthy fats and protein with ground seed mixes, flaxseed, protein powder and super foods. Here are two nutritious tasty recipes to help you celebrate Easter the healthy way.



RAW CACAO TRUFFLES

Serves 10 truffles

Ingredients

- 100g raw cacao powder (a combination of dark and milk chocolate) or 50g 70% or 85% dark chocolate chips
- 1 tsp xylitol (or 1 tsp)
- 1 tsp coconut oil
- 1 tsp almond meal
- 1 tsp cashew meal
- 1 tsp cacao nibs

Method

- 1 Place the cacao in a food processor and grind to form a super powder. If you use a bowl
- 2 Place the cacao and oil together in the food processor and process for 30s to 1 min. Add the ground almonds, raw cacao and xylitol and pulse until a dough has formed.
- 3 The balls are formed and roll your hands over to the cacao nibs. Take individual pieces of the dough and roll into balls to create truffles. Place with a little raw cacao powder if needed. Chill until needed.



SUPER FRUIT GLUTEN-FREE BUNS

Serves eight buns

Ingredients

- 100g almond flour
- 100g ground flaxseed
- 100g coconut flour (not a gluten-free flour mix)
- 100g brown rice flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp xylitol
- 1 tsp coconut oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 100g raisins (dried, soaked)
- 100g apple sauce
- 100g blueberries, raspberries or other small fruit
- 1 tsp vanilla essence

Method

- 1 Combined the cereals in a BPA-free jug and mix.
- 2 Mix the water and flaxseed together and leave to soak for five minutes.
- 3 Mix xylitol, oil together in the food processor, leaving coconut flour and salt out.
- 4 Mix the almond or rice flour, flaxseed, flaxseed together in the processor, pulse several times, transfer into a bowl and mix.
- 5 Then the xylitol mixture into the bowl and mix thoroughly. Then to make it soft dough.
- 6 Mix the coconut sauce into the bowl and place in a greased baking tray. Brush the top with a little xylitol and mix together with a xylitol spray if needed.
- 7 Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the top begins to brown golden. Remove from oven and brush or unsweetened butter.