



Ooey Goopy Date Shakes

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 10 / **Cook Time** / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

blend: to stir together two or more ingredients until just combined; blending is a gentler process than mixing.

purée: to blend, grind, or mash food until it is thick, smooth, and closer to a liquid.

soak: to immerse a hard food for a certain amount of time in a liquid to soften it.

Equipment

- Blender (or pitcher + immersion blender)
- Small bowl
- Liquid measuring cup
- Measuring spoons

Ingredients

Ooey Goopy Date Shakes

- 2 to 4 T raisins
- 2 to 4 pitted dates
- hot water, to soak dried fruit
- 2 C milk, divided **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 2 C dairy-free/nut-free milk)****
- 4 frozen bananas (or 4 bananas + 1 C ice)
- 1 C ice
- 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract **** (for CELIAC/GLUTEN ALLERGY use gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not**

imitation vanilla flavor—check label)**

1 pinch pumpkin pie spice

Food Allergen Substitutions

Ooey Goopy Date Shakes

Dairy: For 2 C milk, substitute 2 C dairy-free/nut-free milk.

Celiac/Gluten/Wheat: Use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor.

Instructions

Ooey Goopy Date Shakes

soak + purée

Soak **2 to 4 tablespoons of raisins** and **2 to 4 pitted dates** in hot water in a small bowl for at least 5 minutes and up to an hour before preparing the shakes. Using a blender (or pitcher + immersion blender), purée the soaked dates and raisins in **1/4 cup of milk** until smooth.

add + blend

Add **1 3/4 cups milk**, **4 frozen bananas**, **1 cup ice**, **1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract**, and **1 pinch of pumpkin pie spice** and blend until well mixed. The goal is to achieve a smooth and thick texture with minimal chunks of fruit.

Featured Ingredient: Dates!

Hi! I'm a Date!

"You wouldn't know from looking at me, but I'm a deliciously sweet fruit! We dates don't have much water in us, so we are naturally dehydrated, and we have lots of fructose—that's a sugar found in fruit. We're better than candy because we're a tasty and healthy source of fiber and energy!"

History & Etymology

Dates are the fruit of the date palm, a flowering plant in the palm family.

It is uncertain where dates originated, but they may have initially started growing in the Middle East or the Persian Gulf. They are considered one of the oldest crops and have been grown in areas of North Africa and the Middle East for around 5,000 years.

Fossil records indicate that the date palm has been around for possibly 50 million years. Archaeological evidence for dates goes back to about 7000 BCE in the Middle East.

Because the date palm tree and its fruit have so many uses—from food to building materials—the date palm is known as the "tree of life" in the Middle East, and it is the national tree of Saudi Arabia. It is also an important symbol in Jewish and Muslim religions.

Spaniards had introduced date palm trees to the United States by 1769, where they grew at the Franciscan Mission San Diego de Alcalá in San Diego, California.

The trees are used for shade in the desert; their leaves are used to make baskets, carpets, and trays; the trunks are used as a frame for tents and for making furniture; and the fiber is suitable for ropes, fish traps, brushes, and filling mattresses and pillows.

The word "date" comes from the Greek word "daktylos," meaning "finger," due to its shape.

Anatomy

Date palm trees can grow up to 100 feet tall. They grow slowly and can reach 100 years of age. Their fronds or leaves are 13 to 20 feet long, and they have spines along their stalks.

Dates, the fruit of the date palm, grow in clumps near the top of the tree, just below the fronds. The fruit can be oval or cylindrical in shape, one inch in diameter, and one to three inches long. Depending on the variety of dates, their color may be yellow, amber, red, or dark brown.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Choose dates that are plump, shiny, and not too wrinkled or hard. They should have a delicate fragrance rather than a pungent smell.

When dates are dried, they become very sweet. The low water and high sugar content give dates a long shelf life of many months to years! People have taken them for long boat trips, crossing deserts, and even living in fortresses as survival food throughout history.

You can eat dates whole or chop them up and add them to cakes, muffins, smoothies, shakes, cereals, or salads. For an appetizer, you can stuff dates with soft cheese, honey, and chopped nuts, wrap them with a thin slice of bacon or prosciutto, and then bake them for about 15 minutes.

Nutrition

Dates are full of potassium and fiber. One cup of dates has 27 percent of the recommended daily potassium requirement and 48 percent of the daily fiber.

Dates also contain vitamin A and several B vitamins. In addition, their high fructose content makes them a great natural source of energy.