

Better than Ice Cream

OK to go nuts over this confection. By Hara Estroff Marano



BOTANICALLY SPEAKING, ALMONDS are not even nuts; they are siblings to the cherry, plum, apricot, and peach. But nutritionally there is nothing soft about them. They are among the most nutrient-dense foods. Almonds can claim noble status; they are mentioned in the Bible, tucked into King Tut's tomb, and traditionally adorn wedding tables as symbols of good fortune and fertility. Modern science is now ratifying it's stature. It turns out that almonds are brimming with monounsaturated fats, which make them particularly protective of hearts and minds; they are higher in fiber than any other nut and contain an assortment of phytochemicals that have unusual abilities to fight disease. No one now claims that almonds bring you babies, but they are rich in folic acid, known to aid fetal development.

Many of the phytochemicals in almonds—ellagic acid, phytic acid, and quercetin reside in their skin, but even blanched and skinned nuts boast protein, Vitamin E, the B vitamins thiamin and riboflavin, and minerals magnesium, zinc, copper, and manganese. The fat in almonds protects circulation lowering bad LDL and total cholesterol. It also helps dieters by aiding body-fat loss.

Cremolata, or Frozen Almond Milk

SERVINGS: 10

TOTAL TIME: 1 Hour

It's a kind of sorbetto that's loaded with nutrients. Enjoy a scoop alone or topped with berries. The perfect light lunch. Or dessert.

Ingredients

4 1/2 cups blanched almonds
6 cups water
1/2 cup sugar

Directions

Place large colander or strainer over a bowl and line with three layers of cheesecloth so an excess of cloth hangs over the sides. Place 1 1/2 cups of nuts and 2 cups of water into a blender and process until smooth. Pour into colander. Repeat twice until all the almonds are processed. Allow the liquid to drain into the bowl for half an hour. Using the back of a large spoon, force remaining liquid through the colander. Then gather the ends of the cheesecloth around the almond paste and squeeze as much liquid into the colander as possible. There should be about 5 cups of almond milk. Discard the almond paste or reserve for other uses. Whisk the sugar into the almond milk until dissolved. Process in an ice cream maker until frozen. Or pour the liquid into a shallow baking pan and place in the freezer; when almost fully frozen, cut into pieces and process in batches in a food processor. Refreeze for at least an hour.