



Sticky Icky Toffee Date Muffins + Quick Salted Caramel + Ooey Goey Date Shakes

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 40 / Cook Time 26 / Serves 4 - 6

Shopping List

- FRESH
- 1 lemon (or 1 T lemon juice)
- 4 bananas to freeze (or 4 bananas + 1 C ice)
- DAIRY AND EGGS
- 15 T (2 sticks) butter **** (see allergy subs below) ****
- 2 C milk, divided **** (see allergy subs below) ****
- 2 eggs **** (see allergy subs below) ****
- PANTRY
- 8 oz pitted dates (about 10 to 12 dates)
- 3/4 C raisins
- 1 1/2 C all-purpose flour **** (see allergy subs below) ****
- 1 3/4 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 C packed light brown sugar
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract **** (see allergy subs below) ****
- 1/4 C honey/agave nectar

- sea salt flakes, optional
- HAVE ON HAND
- 1 3/4 C water
- 1 C ice

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

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

simmer: to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

wet vs dry: to mix wet and dry ingredients separately before combining them: dry ingredients are flours, leavening agents, salt, and spices; wet ingredients are those that dissolve or can be dissolved (sugar, eggs, butter, oils, honey, vanilla, milk, and juices).

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.

Equipment

- Oven
- Muffin pan
- Paper cupcake liners
- Small saucepan
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Citrus juicer (optional)
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Liquid measuring cup
- Medium mixing bowl
- Large mixing bowl
- Electric handheld mixer (or immersion blender)
- Spatula
- Whisk

- Toothpicks
- Blender (or pitcher + immersion blender)
- Small bowl

Ingredients

Sticky Toffee Date Muffins + Quick Salted Caramel

Muffins:

- 8 oz pitted dates (about 8 to 10)
- 1/2 C raisins
- 1 T fresh lemon juice
- 3/4 C water
- 1 1/2 C all-purpose flour ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)****
- 1 1/2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 14 T (1 3/4 sticks) butter ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance)****
- 3/4 C packed light brown sugar
- 2 eggs ****(for EGG ALLERGY sub 1/2 C mashed, ripe banana)****
- 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY use gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)****

Caramel:

- 1/4 C honey/agave nectar
- 1/4 C packed light brown sugar
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 T butter ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance)****
- sea salt flakes, optional

Ooey Goey 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 dairy-free/nut-free milk)****
- 4 frozen bananas (or 4 bananas + 1 C ice)
- 1 C ice
- 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY use gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)****
- 1 pinch pumpkin pie spice

Food Allergen Substitutions

Sticky Toffee Date Muffins + Quick Salted Caramel

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour. Use gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor.

Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance, in Muffins and Caramel.

Egg: For 2 eggs, substitute 1/2 C mashed, ripe banana.

Ooey Goey Date Shakes

Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free milk.

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

Instructions

Sticky Toffee Date Muffins + Quick Salted Caramel

muffins: chop + squeeze + simmer

Have your kids chop up **8 ounces of pitted dates** (about 8 to 10) and **1/2 cup raisins**. Add the dates and **1 tablespoon of lemon juice** to a small saucepan with **3/4 cup of water** and heat to a boil on your stovetop. Reduce the heat and simmer gently until the chopped dates soften and start to fall apart, about 3 to 6 minutes. Add **1/2 cup of raisins** to the saucepan, remove from heat, and set aside to cool completely.

preheat + measure + stir

While the date mixture cools, preheat your oven to 325 F. Then, measure and stir together your dry ingredients into a medium bowl: **1 1/2 cups flour, 1 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice, 3/4 teaspoon**

salt, and **1 teaspoon baking soda**.

combine + cream

Measure and add **14 tablespoons of butter** and **3/4 cup brown sugar** to a large bowl and cream together with a hand mixer or immersion blender until light and fluffy, about 3 to 5 minutes.

crack + purée + whisk

Crack **2 eggs** into the butter mixture, mixing well after each addition and scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Next, measure and mix in **1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract** along with the cooled date mixture and purée until smooth. Finally, whisk in your flour mixture (dry ingredients) until combined.

fill + bake

Fill a lined muffin pan with batter and bake for 15 to 20 or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out mostly clean with just a few crumbs stuck to it.

caramel: combine + simmer + spoon

Meanwhile, make the Quick Salted Caramel (sticky toffee). In a small saucepan on your stovetop, combine **1/4 cup honey**, **1/4 cup brown sugar**, and **1/8 teaspoon salt** and bring to a simmer over medium heat, whisking to dissolve the sugar. Once the sugar dissolves and bubbles, remove from heat and swirl in **1 tablespoon of butter**. When the muffins are finished baking, spoon the sticky toffee over each muffin and sprinkle with flakes of sea salt, if desired. Serve with Ooey Gooley Date Shakes (see recipe)!

Ooey Gooley 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.