Raw Desserts:
Living Treats Make the Best Sweets
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Joy Houston is a graduate of Living Light Culinary Arts Institute and a certified Raw Food Nutrition Educator, focusing on the benefits of incorporating raw food principles into the diets of people who are motivated to improve their health and the quality of their lives.

Joy is the author of **The Delicious Revolution** and **Rocking Body Raw Food** and several e-books that focus on creating a path to healthy eating that works with your lifestyle. She promotes implementing changes in increments you feel comfortable with and that work with your lifestyle and schedule. She reminds us that any negative feelings we create around eating; stress, denial, restriction, frustration, confusion, all cause stress hormones to be released. She asks that instead of focusing on the things we remove from our diets, we focus on adding healthy foods we truly enjoy.

“I cook what I love to eat. When I test new recipes, I set out to do three things; incorporate alkalizing concepts into meals, consume more foods in their raw form, and to make recipes that are motivating to eat because they are delicious. If I love the meals, I’ll eat them and experience vital health.”

Get Joy’s [free newsletter](http://thedeliciousrevolution.com/) with recipes and seasonal eating tips.
Raw Desserts

Living Treats Make the Best Sweets

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INTRODUCTION

For the longest time the Godzilla that trampled my city of healthy eating was my mother-in-love’s lemon bars. They are perfection. She was baking up a batch while I was on a raw cleanse which had me wracking my brain to devise a raw version that would be anywhere near as tantalizing. After a little experimenting, I crafted a recipe I was proud of and offered the Queen of Lemon Bars a Living Lemon Bar. To my surprise, this advocate of butter and sugar, the fairy of all things flour, said, “I think I like these better.” That was the beginning of my obsession with raw and living desserts.

Make no dietary mistake, raw desserts are loaded with sugars and fats. The sugars come from a variety of sources; fruits, stevia, agave nectar, dates, maple, raw honey and so on, but they are still sugars, so don’t over do it. The fats may come from nuts, coconut oils, or avocados. Although these fats and sugars are certainly healthier alternatives to those found in highly processed, enriched flour and refined sugar filled desserts, they are still to be eaten in moderation. Luckily these treats are more nutrient dense and rich, so most people find that their sweet tooth is satisfied with small portions of these treats.

LIVING LEMON BARS

Ingredients:
Crust
¾ cup macadamia nuts (soaked 8 hours, drained and rinsed)
½ cup cashews (soaked 8 hours, drained and rinsed)
1 cup dried pineapple, diced
½ cup dried coconut
3 to 4 tablespoons lemon juice
lemon rind from 2 lemons

Topping
rinds from 2 lemons
¾ cup coconut oil
2 tablespoons raw honey
3 to 4 tablespoons fresh squeezed lemon juice
dash sea salt

To make the crust combine all ingredients except lemon juice in a food processor and pulse. Slowly add the lemon juice through the top until a dough-like consistency is formed. Process until the dough is free of chunky nut pieces. Scrape down and stir the mixture to achieve the doughy consistency. Place the crust mixture in an 8” by 8” square glass pan. Press the mixture into the pan to form a crust of even thickness.

To make the tangy frosting, add all topping ingredients to the processor. Pulse until a relatively even consistency is achieved. Process until the mixture becomes creamy and a little fluffy. Do not over process or the mixture will melt and become soupy. Pour the topping on the crust. If necessary, spread to distribute evenly. Cover the pan and place it in the fridge until the topping sets. It will be firm and waxy-feeling. Slice the bars into small squares and serve.

CACOA PUDDING

Ingredients:
2 ripe avocados
¼ cup raw cacao powder
½ to ¾ cup maple syrup or agave
2 tablespoons coconut oil
seeds from 1 vanilla pod or 1 tablespoon vanilla
dash sea salt

Put all ingredients in the VitaMix and blend. Stop to scrape down sides. Blend again until warm. Serve warm.
This makes a great pudding parfait. Layer with slices of ripe banana and sliced almonds or your choice of fresh seasonal fruits. A subtle variation on this can be made by adding mint, or by reducing the amount of sweetener slightly and replacing it with fresh squeezed orange juice. The possibilities with this pudding base are endless. It also makes a fabulous frosting as you will see with the Mint Cacao Brownies because it firms to a totally different texture when refrigerated.

**DECADENT CARAMEL**

*Ingredients:*

- ½ cup coconut oil
- ⅓ cup almond butter
- ½ cup maple syrup
- seeds from ½ a vanilla bean pod or 1 tsp vanilla
- ¼ to ½ teaspoon salt

Blend all ingredients, starting with a ¼ teaspoon of the salt, in a food processor. Pulse until well combined, then let it process for several minutes. Taste to check salt level and add more if desired. The mixture will warm slightly in the processor and the textures will meld, eventually forming a gooey, delicious caramel. Serve drizzled over cold, crisp apple slices garnished with a sprinkle of cinnamon.

**MINT CACAO BROWNIES**

*Ingredients:*

*Brownies*

- 1 cup almonds (soaked 8 hours, drained and rinsed)
- 1 cup cashews (soaked 8 hours, drained and rinsed)
- 1 cup chopped dates, pits removed
- ⅛ cup raw cacao powder
- 1/8th teaspoon sea salt
- 20-25 mint leaves or ¼ teaspoon organic mint extract
¼ cup maple syrup

**Frosting**

*a full batch of the Cacao Pudding Page 60*

Pulse all brownie ingredients in the food processor until well combined. Process until mixture becomes a dough of uniform consistency. Transfer the mixture to an 8” by 8” square glass pan. Press the mixture into the pan to form an even surface. Top with the Cacao Pudding and refrigerate until the pudding sets to form a creamy, light frosting. Serve garnished with mint leaves. Grab one for yourself before you serve them or you may not get one.

**CARAMEL COCONUT BROWNIES**

*Ingredients:*

**Brownies**

1 cup almonds (soaked 8 hours, drained and rinsed)
1 cup cashews (soaked 8 hours, drained and rinsed)
1 cup chopped dates, pits removed
¾ cup raw cacao powder
1/8th teaspoon sea salt
¼ cup maple syrup

**Frosting**

*a full batch of the Decadent Caramel Page 61*

**Topping**

¼ cup dried coconut

Pulse all brownie ingredients in the food processor until well combined. Process until mixture becomes a dough of uniform consistency. Transfer the mixture to an 8” by 8” square glass pan. Press the mixture into the pan to form an even surface. Top with the batch of Decadent Caramel. Sprinkle with coconut and serve.
I SCREAM (RAW, DAIRY-FREE ICE CREAM)

Ingredients:
seeds from one vanilla bean
juice from one young coconut (1 cup)
meat from one young coconut (need at least ¾ cup)
1 cup almond milk (see video here)
2 tablespoons coconut oil
½ cup chopped dates (be sure NO PITS)
¼ to ½ cup maple syrup (taste to adjust sweetness)

Put all ingredients in the Vita-Mix and blend on high until creamy smooth. Pour half the mixture into an ice cube tray, refrigerate the remaining half. Once the cubes are frozen, add then back to the unfrozen mixture in the blender. Blend to a soft-serve consistency and enjoy! Flavor this recipe as you see fit!

MINT CACAO ALMOND BARK

Ingredients:
Chocolate Base
⅓ cup raw cacao powder
¾ cup coconut oil
⅔ cup maple syrup
dash of sea salt

Mint Cream
1 cup raw cashews (soaked 8 hours, drained and rinsed)
1 teaspoon vanilla (or the seeds of half a vanilla pod)
4 tablespoons raw agave nectar
1 teaspoon organic mint extract (I adore the Flavorganics brand which is nonGMO and gluten free!)
½ cup dates (chopped to ensure no pits)
⅓ cup chopped fresh spinach

Topping
½ cup chopped almonds
Blend chocolate base ingredients in the Vita-Mix until creamy smooth. Pour onto a cookie sheet lined with wax paper. Place flat in the freezer while you make the mint cream. Clean out the Vita-Mix and dry it well. Blend mint cream ingredients using the tamper to press the mixture down toward the blades. It may sound odd to add spinach to this recipe, but you’ll have to trust me. The spinach not only adds phytonutrients and iron, but also turns the mint cream a lovely shade of green. No one will be able to taste the healthy greens hiding in your dessert. You have my word on it! Once the mint cream it smooth, remove the chocolate base from the freezer and spread a thin layer on top. Sprinkle the chopped almonds on the mint cream and lightly pat to keep the almonds in place. Return the cookie sheet to the freezer until the bark is firm. Cut into bite size pieces (think Andes’ Mints). It is not necessary, but I find it easier to cover the cut bark with another sheet of wax paper and a cookie sheet and invert it. This makes it very easy to peel the wax paper from the back. I then dust the bottom of the bark with raw cacao powder in a tea ball. This makes the individual candies easier to transfer to a serving plate. Delicious!

ORANGE CACAO BARK:
The mint almond bark I created for my raw dessert class had me brewing an idea for more of these “lighter” desserts, lighter because they don’t have nuts as their base, making them less filling. They pack all the flavor without sitting heavy on the tummy like a brownie might. Start with the same chocolate base for the mint almond bark. Top it with an orange cashew cream. Go totally pro and dehydrate soaked pecans tossed in orange rind, maple and a dash of cayenne and clove to give the bars an upscale feel, a light crunch and a subtle kick (or a swift kick if I really do up the cayenne). You can also use the Orange Cashew Cream to swirl with Vanilla I Scream to make 50/50 bars that blow away any packaged popsicle.

**Chocolate Base**
- ⅓ cup raw cacao powder
- ¾ cup coconut oil
- ⅓ cup maple syrup
- dash of salt

**Orange Cream**
- 1 cup raw cashews
  (soaked 8 hours, drained and rinsed)
1 teaspoon vanilla (or the seeds of half a vanilla pod)
4 tablespoons raw honey (I have some local blueberry blossom honey!!)
4-5 tablespoons fresh squeezed organic orange juice (not too runny!)
the rind from one whole organic orange
½ cup dates (chopped to ensure no pits)
**Topping**
rind of one organic orange
1 tablespoon dried coconut

Blend chocolate base ingredients in the Vita-Mix until creamy smooth. Pour onto a cookie sheet lined with wax paper. Place flat in the freezer while you make the Orange cream. Clean out the Vita-Mix and dry it well. Blend Orange Cream ingredients using the tamper to press the mixture down toward the blades. Once the cream is smooth, remove the chocolate base from the freezer and spread a thin layer on top. Zest a second orange over the Orange Cream. Lightly dust with a fine shredded dried cococnut. Return the cookie sheet to the freezer until the bark is firm. Cut into bite size pieces (think Andes’ Mints). It is not necessary, but I find it easier to cover the cut bark with another sheet of wax paper and a cookie sheet and invert it. This makes it very easy to peel the wax paper from the back. Dust the bottom of the bark with raw cacao powder by filling a tea ball with cacao and lightly tapping. This makes the individual candies easier to transfer to a serving plate. Delicious!

**Spumoni Gelato**

*Ingredients:*
seeds from one vanilla bean
juice from one young coconut (need 1 cup)
meat from one young coconut (need at least ¾ cup)
1 cup almond milk (see video here)
2 tablespoons coconut oil
½ cup chopped dates (be sure NO PITS)
¼ to ½ cup maple syrup (taste to adjust sweetness)

*Toppings:*
½ fresh cherries, pitted and chopped  
½ cup pistachios  
½ cup raw chocolate bar, cut into chunks or shaved into curls

Put all ingredients in the Vita-Mix and blend on high until creamy smooth. Pour half the mixture into an ice cube tray, refrigerate the remaining half. Once the cubes are frozen, add them back to the unfrozen mixture in the blender. Blend to a soft-serve consistency and place in serving dishes. Add toppings and enjoy. You can divide the ice cream mixture into fourths, blending the cherries into one third, the cacao into one next third, and the pistachios (plus one tablespoon spinach to lightly die green) into the last third. Pour one layer gently on the next, freeze briefly to set, slice and serve.

**Tiramisu**

*Ingredients:

Cake
1 tablespoons Chia Seeds, ground  
½ cup strong coffee or espresso (cooled to room temp)  
>combine chia & coffee to form gel before you begin  
3 tablespoons coconut oil  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon vanilla  
1 ½ cups almond pulp (from almond milk, click for video)  
¾ cup chopped dates  

Chocolate Mousse
1 tablespoon Chai Seeds, ground  
½ cup strong coffee or espresso  
>combine chia & coffee to form gel before you begin  
½ cup coconut cream (see note below)  
¼ cup agave  
¼ cup raw cacao  
½ cup coconut oil (warmed to liquid)  
1 tablespoon lecithin powder  

Vanilla Mousse
1 tablespoon Chai Seeds, ground
2 tablespoons vanilla
½ cup agave

>combine chia, vanilla & agave to form gel before you begin

½ cup coconut cream (see note below)
½ cup coconut oil (warmed to liquid)
1 tablespoon lecithin powder

Oil a 10 inch spring form pan with coconut oil. You should have 3 small dishes of gel, one for each section.

For the cake, process dates and vanilla to form a smooth paste. Add salt, coconut oil and one dish of the coffee/chia gel to the processor and process until smooth. While the processor is running add the almond pulp a little at a time. Process until lightly fluffy. Spread the mixture in the bottom of the spring form pan. Refrigerate while you prepare the chocolate mousse.

For the Chocolate Mousse, combine all ingredients except the warmed coconut oil and lecithin powder to the Vita-Mix and blend until smooth. While the machine is running add warmed coconut oil and lecithin. Blend until smooth. Pour evenly over the cake layer and refrigerate.

For the Vanilla Mousse, combine all ingredients except the warmed coconut oil and lecithin powder to the Vita-Mix and blend until smooth. While the machine is running add warmed coconut oil and lecithin. Blend until smooth. Pour evenly over the chocolate mousse layer and refrigerate.

Chilled at least 4 hours (or prepare the day prior). Slide a knife around the edge of the spring form pan before opening. Dust with raw cacao powder. Slice with a warm knife and serve.

Note: Make coconut cream by blending the meat of 5 young coconuts. Reserve the juice. Blend the meat in the Vita-Mix until a sour cream consistency is achieved.
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