

Winter Fruit Salad



TOTAL TIME: 20 minutes (Prep: 20 minutes, Cook: 0 minutes)

YIELD: 4 Servings

Fresh, sweet, & juicy, this Winter Fruit Salad is perfect for everything from breakfast to holiday dinners. It's easy to make with tropical fruits and over the top delicious thanks to the honey lime dressing.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups fresh pineapple chunks
- 2 cups mandarin orange sections
(4-6 mandarin oranges)
- 1 cup pomegranate arils
- 2 cups kiwi chunks 4
- 1 cup blueberries options

Honey Lime Dressing

- 2 tbsp lime juice freshly squeezed
- 1 tsp lime zest grated with a microplane grater
- 2 tbsp honey maple syrup or agave

DIRECTIONS

- 1.** Start by prepping all of your fruit, you want to make sure everything is in bite sized pieces.
- 2.** Next whisk together the lime juice, lime zest, and honey until combined.
- 3.** Add the fruit to a serving bowl and pour the dressing over the top.
- 4.** Toss to combine and serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate for up to 4 hours before serving.

NOTE

- You want to use honey that is liquid at room temperature. If yours is solid, heat it over low heat just until it's liquefied, but not hot, before whisking it in.
- This fruit salad tastes best the day it's made, but it will keep for 2-3 days refrigerated.

Recipe source: <https://getinspiredeveryday.com/>



Healthy Apple Pie Oatmeal Cookies



YIELD: 15 Servings

These oatmeal cookies are full of apples and cinnamon, and they're incredibly soft and chewy. They'll stay that way for up to one week if stored in an airtight container — if they last that long!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (100g) instant oats (gluten-free if necessary and measured like this)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (90g) whole wheat flour or gluten-free* flour (measured like this)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking powder
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp salt
- 2 tbsp (28g) coconut oil or unsalted butter, melted
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (120mL) agave (see Notes!)
- 1 cup (125g) finely diced red apple (about 1 medium – and see Notes!)

DIRECTIONS

- 1.** Whisk together the oats, flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the coconut oil or butter, egg, and vanilla. Stir in the agave. Add in the flour mixture, stirring just until incorporated. Fold in the apple. Chill for 30 minutes.
- 2.** Preheat the oven to 325°F, and line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
- 3.** Drop the cookie dough into 15 rounded scoops onto the prepared sheet using a spoon and spatula, and flatten slightly. Bake at 325°F for 11-14 minutes. Cool on the pan for 10 minutes before turning out onto a wire rack.

Recipe source: <https://lamyshealthybaking.com>



NOTE

- IMPORTANT MEASURING NOTE – READ BEFORE BEGINNING: It's extremely important to measure both the oats and flour correctly using this method or a kitchen scale. Too much of either will dry out the cookies and leave them cakey, bready, or dry, instead of soft and chewy.
- IMPORTANT APPLE NOTES – READ BEFORE BEGINNING: For the best results, dice the apples very finely. I cut mine into 1/8" bits. I recommend making them no larger than 1/4" pieces. The larger the chunks, the crisper and less soft they'll be. Finely diced apples won't completely soften while baking, but they won't be nearly as crisp and crunchy as larger apple chunks. If the cookies are stored in an airtight container for a few days, the apple pieces will naturally soften over time as well.
- IMPORTANT BAKING NOTES – READ BEFORE BEGINNING: As long as the ingredients are measured correctly, these cookies should spread while baking. Flattening the cookie dough before baking also helps give them a spreading "head start."
- Do not over-bake these cookies! They're ready to come out of the oven when the centers still feel slightly soft and underdone. The heat from the warm baking sheet will continue to cook the centers all the way through while you let the cookies rest for 10 minutes after pulling the pan from the oven.
- OATS NOTES + ALTERNATIVE: Instant oats are also known as "quick cooking" or "one-minute" oats. They come in large canisters or bags, just like old-fashioned rolled oats. They're smaller and thinner than old-fashioned rolled oats and only contain one ingredient (oats!), just like old-fashioned rolled oats. They are not the ones in the small flavored packets of oatmeal.
- In a pinch, to make your own, add the same amount of old-fashioned rolled oats to a food processor, and pulse 10-12 times or until the oats are about 1/4 to 1/8 of their original size.
- FLOUR ALTERNATIVES: White whole wheat flour, whole wheat pastry flour, or all-purpose flour may be substituted for the whole wheat flour. Oat flour (gluten-free if needed) may also be substituted, but be very careful when measuring it because it tends to be more absorbent than wheat-based flours!
- CINNAMON NOTE: I highly recommend Saigon cinnamon. It has a slightly stronger, richer, and sweeter flavor compared to "regular" cinnamon. This is the one that I use, and it's really affordable. (It's basically the only kind I use in my baking now!)
- SWEETENER ALTERNATIVES: Honey or pure maple syrup may be substituted for the agave. Alternatively, 1/2 cup (96g) coconut sugar or brown sugar + 5 tablespoons (75mL) milk (any type!) may be substituted as well. Regardless of which you use, make sure it's at room temperature! If chilled, it will re-solidify the melted butter or coconut oil.
- I generally don't recommend substituting sugar-free maple syrup. It's often water-based, which makes your oatmeal cookies turn out more cakey or bready.
- GLUTEN-FREE VERSION: Use certified gluten-free instant oats and certified gluten free oat flour. Alternatively, for a non-oat-flour version, use the following: 1/2 cup (60g) millet flour, 2 tablespoons (15g) tapioca flour, 2 tablespoons (15g) brown rice flour, and 1/2 teaspoon xanthan gum. Many store-bought gluten free flour blends (I like this one from Bob's Red Mill) will also work, if measured like this.
- NUT-FREE VERSION: Use stick-style vegan butter (I like this one and this one) or unsalted butter.
- DAIRY-FREE VERSION: Use the coconut oil option or stick-style vegan butter (I like this one and this one).
- HOW TO STORE: Store leftover cookies in an airtight container. If left at room temperature, they'll keep for up to one week. If refrigerated, they'll last longer. Once baked and fully cooled, these oatmeal cookies also freeze really well!



Quick & Easy Taco Soup



TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes (Prep: 30 minutes, Cook: 0 minutes)

YIELD: 4 Servings

This quick and easy taco soup recipe is a favorite! Perfect for warming up on a cold day, this soup is easy to prepare with ingredients you can keep on hand for those times when you need dinner in a pinch!

INGREDIENTS

- _ 1½ pounds ground beef
- _ ½ onion, chopped
- _ 28 oz can diced tomatoes (undrained)
- _ 15 oz can corn (undrained)
- _ 8 oz can tomato sauce
- _ 1 small can black or kidney beans (optional)
- _ 1 cup water
- _ 1 envelope taco season
- _ salt/pepper

DIRECTIONS

- 1.** Brown ground beef in a large skillet until crumbly.
- 2.** Add chopped onion, saute until softened.
- 3.** In a large pot or crock pot add remaining ingredients.
- 4.** Cook in pot until boiling. In a crockpot cook on high for 1 hour and on low for 4 hours.
- 5.** Serve topped with tortilla chips and grated cheese
- *Our favorite chips to use are Fritos original Corn Chips
- 6.** You may also like to top with avocado or sour cream.

Recipe source: <https://simpleasthatblog.com>



Be sure to check out Ready, Set, Explore!
Another family fun program from the
University of Wyoming Extension!



How it works!

1. Register once to participate at: https://bit.ly/readysetexplore_registration
2. Upon registering, you'll receive a link to the full Ready, Set, Explore! packet that includes activities and extras for all months (Oct–May).
3. Choose to do 4 or more of the activities listed for each month.
4. Submit monthly completion form and share pictures from your adventures! https://bit.ly/readysetexplore_completion

READY, SET, EXPLORE!

JANUARY 2026 - General Activities List

1. Go snowshoeing
2. Warm up with a swim in a local hot springs
3. Plan Ahead! It's the New Year, that means that you have a whole year of fun outdoor adventures ahead of you. Take time to plan ahead 1 outdoor trip you want to take this year (ex. Camping, hiking, skiing, etc.)
 - Things to plan:**
 - Where you're going
 - How long will you be there
 - Who is going with you
 - What time of year
 - What gear will you need
 - Share why do you want to go on this trip
4. Go Stargazing! Take advantage of the longer nights and clear winter skies to observe constellations and planets.
5. Create a winter scavenger hunt with your friends
6. Frozen Water Art- Collect leaves, twigs, and small objects, place them in shallow dishes with water, and let them freeze overnight. Hang the frozen decorations from trees in the morning.
7. Snowball Target Practice- Set up targets (like cans or plastic bottles) and have a snowball-throwing contest to see who can knock them down.
8. Shovel someone's sidewalk- Whether it be a neighbor, friend, or family member, take some time to show them some new year love!
9. Warm up around a campfire and roast some s'mores!
10. Have a Winter Picnic. Grab your favorite warm drink, a snack, blanket, and head to a local park or even your own backyard!
11. Go ice skating!
12. Take silly group photos at your favorite nature spot!
13. January 1st – **First Day Hikes**: This day is when many parks have free entry to popular spots that require fees. Take advantage of the opportunity to get outside for an incredible hike! We recommend checking out your local WY State Parks!
14. January 5th - National Bird Day: How many birds can you spot in your community or favorite park? This Cardinals in the Snow **chalk pastel project** is perfect for today!
15. January is Walk Your Dog Month: This is one of the simplest ways to get outdoors. Take your dog on a walk each day and track your progress!
16. Start a **phenology wheel**.
17. Ice – Make a **nature ice wreath**.
18. Snowflakes – Learn all about **the different shapes of snow**.
19. Hibernation – Watch this video on **why animals hibernate**.
20. National Seed Swap Day (29) – Now is the time to start **planning your summer gardens**! Do you know someone who gardens? Connect your kids with a knowledgeable mentor if you don't garden yourself.