

Chocolate Pecan Pie Balls

Ingredients:

- 2.5 Cups of pecans pieces chopped and toasted
- 1.5 Cup of Graham cracker crumbs (vanilla wafers or Oreos can be substituted)
- 1 Cup of brown sugar, firmly packed
- 2 Tbsps maple syrup or light Kayro syrup
- 1/3 Cup bourbon, brandy Amaretto or spiced rum (**for non alcoholic version** add 1/2 tsp of brandy or rum extract to 1/3 cup of hot water.
- 1 Tsp vanilla
- 2 Ounces of butter (1/2 stick)
- 7 Ounces of dark chocolate (or white chocolate) bark (a.k.a. candy coating).

Directions:

1. Chop the pecans with a heavy knife into small pieces. The pieces need to be small enough that they won't interfere with rolling the dough into small balls. Spread the pieces out on a baking sheet and **toast** the pecans in a preheated oven set for broil. I find that placing the pan 8-10 inches below the heat source for 2 to 2.5 minutes is sufficient. Be careful not to scorch the pecans. Take them out of the oven and let them cool until they can be comfortably handled.

2. I use either Graham cracker crumbs or vanilla wafer crumbs. The crumbs can be made by placing the ingredient in a one gallon zip lock bag and then break the up. I use a wooden mallet to do this but there are other things that can be just as effective. Next, use a rolling pin to further pulverize the ingredient. The final product should be no coarser than raw sugar. Of course, if you plan to use Graham cracker crumbs, you can find these in most grocery stores already prepared and ready to use..

3. Combine first three ingredients in a large bowl.

4. I use the non-alcoholic version. Blend 1/2 tsp of rum or brandy extract, 1 tsp of vanilla and two tbsps of Maple syrup or Kayro Light in 1/3 cup of hot water. Otherwise, use 1/3 cup bourbon or whatever suits your tastes.

5. Pour the liquid over the mixed dry ingredients and then blend well. Use wet hands, if necessary, to make sure all the ingredients are mixed thoroughly.

6. Melt 1/2 stick of butter and pour over the mixture and blend.

7. Form balls with about two tablespoon of “dough” and roll in hands to form balls about the size of a ping pong ball. It is helpful to keep your hand clean of the “dough” and wet, which may require rinsing your hands periodically during the process.

8. Place the “dough” balls on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. When finished, cover the balls with a sheet of wax paper and place the cookie sheet in the refrigerator for at least 2 hrs or one hour in a freezer.

Optional: After all balls are made, roll the balls again with slightly water-dampened hands. This will make balls smooth before dipping in chocolate.

9. Melt chocolate bark (a.k.a. candy coating) in a double boiler or microwave per directions on package. Be careful not to scorch the chocolate.

10. Dip or roll the chilled/frozen balls in the melted chocolate.

11. When coated place each ball on a cookie sheet lined with parchment or wax paper.

12. Once the coating has cooled and is firm, the pecan pie balls are ready to eat. The balls can be stored in the refrigerator for consumption later or stored long-term by freezing. It takes about 15 minutes for a ball to thaw. You can also eat them frozen!