

Chocolate Pecan Pie Balls

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 Cups of pecans pieces toasted and chopped
- 1 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
- 1/4 Cup bourbon, brandy or spiced rum -- non alcoholic version (substitute almond or rum extract, or any other that may suit your taste. Add to 2 ounces of water/juice).
- 1 Tsp vanilla
- 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 put 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 blend 1/4 tsp of almond extract, 1 tsp of vanilla and two Tbsps of Kayro Light or Maple syrup in two ounces of water. Or, 1/4 cup bourbon, brandy or spiced rum

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. Form balls by scooping out a heaping tablespoon of your “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 requires rinsing your hands periodically during the process.
7. Place the “dough” balls on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. When finished, place the cookie sheet in the freezer for at least 2 hrs.

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

8. 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.
9. Dip or roll the frozen balls in the melted chocolate.
10. When coated place each ball on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.

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!