

Guilt Free Pumpkin Pie Smoothie

Fall is in the air here in the Northern Hemisphere. I absolutely love this time of year because this is when all the fabulous root vegetables like the various squashes, beets and pumpkin are found in abundance. With Thanksgiving weekend just passing (in Canada), I thought I would put up a recipe post for Pumpkin Pie smoothie.

This recipe tastes as delicious as a creamy pumpkin pie without any of the unhealthy ingredients. Instead of pumpkin pie filling, in this smoothie you'll find pureed pumpkin and unsweetened coconut milk. Pure pumpkin is not only tasty, it is also chock full nutrients like fiber, iron, vitamin C, vitamin A (70% of your total daily intake from just one serving) and vitamin E. Vitamins A and E are important nutrients for our immune system, while fiber, as you know, is important for gut health. It is also low carbohydrate, only 5g per serving (3 of which are fiber), low calories, only 20 per serving, and low glycemic load (although the GI is 75 the GL is very low at only 3).

Coconut milk, is a medium chain triglyceride that is easily broken down and used by the body for energy production rather than fat storage. Additionally, it is anti-viral, strengthens the immune system and improves brain function.

Lastly, this recipe calls for cinnamon, a spice that helps keep our blood sugar stable and two optional extras which may be new to you maca powder and mesquite powder. Maca is a mineral rich adaptogen (meaning it helps the body's ability to adapt to stressors) known to help regulate the endocrine and nervous system. It helps to boost energy and endurance and has been touted to enhance libido. It is high in iodine, iron, vitamin C and copper and contains a total of 20 amino acids, including 7 of the essential ones. Mesquite powder comes from ground up pods of the mesquite plant. It has a molasses like flavour and adds thickness and a hint of sweetness. It contains calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron and zinc and is a source of fiber and the amino acid lysine. Research shows that Lysine helps to improve exercise endurance and strength and stimulates growth hormone and protein building. And while I know many of you are thinking about BBQ when you think of mesquite, believe me, mesquite powder doesn't taste anything like a BBQ. If you have never tried either of these ingredients before, maybe give one of them a try.

Drink up and enjoy this wonderful fall treat without the guilt.

Ingredients:

½ cup unsweetened coconut milk

1/3 cup pure pumpkin puree

½ a ripe banana (best if frozen)

1 tsp cinnamon

¼ tsp nutmeg

1 scoop protein powder (vanilla or plain)

¼ vanilla bean powder*

A handful of ice (or as much or as little as you like based on the consistency you desire)

½ cup of water (or as much or as little as you like based on the consistency you desire)

Optional Nutritional Extras:

1 tsp Maca powder

1 tsp Mesquite powder

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Top with an extra sprinkling of cinnamon and even some crushed up pecans if you like!

*if you don't have vanilla bean powder you can use a fresh vanilla pod, scrape out the vanilla bean or pure organic vanilla extract