

Savoring Sugar-Free with Nutty Apple Cinnamon Breakfast Rice

Alisa Fleming, www.GoDairyFree.org ~ For the past year I have been gradually reducing the added sugars in my diet. These efforts have culminated into this past month, when I have managed to forgo all added sugars whatsoever. That's right ... no white sugar, maple syrup, or even agave. I admit to a sprinkling of stevia in that "green drink" which would otherwise be unpalatable, but aside from this I have been sugar and sugar substitute-free. How am I doing? Better. Those chocolate cravings are at last subsiding and I have no problem passing up a slice of cake. However, my taste buds are still clamoring for just a bit of the sweet stuff. Luckily, I love fruit, which is an excellent source of natural sugar …

With some apples on hand that were quickly reaching their final days of survival, and a nice leftover batch of jasmine brown rice, I whipped up a breakfast cereal that is naturally sweetened with apples and raisins. That little dose of fruit sugar is enough to give me a friendly good morning wake up call, while the fiber, protein, and fat provided by this rice dish ensures that I won't be sound asleep on my keyboard by 10am.

Because this recipe contains no sugar, this is one time to pass up those super-tart Pippins or Granny Smiths that you might typically bake with. I used Fuji, but feel free to use any firm apple, such as Braeburn, Jonagold, or Gala.

Nutty Apple Cinnamon Breakfast Rice

- 4 Large Apples, cut into ½" pieces (unpeeled)
- ½ cup Chopped Walnuts (cashews or pecans will also work well)
- 2 Tablespoons Coconut Oil or Margarine (may use just 1T if watching fat intake)
- 1 teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
- Generous pinch of Salt
- ½ cup Raisins
- 2 cups Cooked Brown Rice

Preheat your oven to 350°F.

In a 9 x 13" baking dish, stir together the chopped apples and nuts. Drizzle with the coconut oil or margarine, and stir to coat. Sprinkle the mixture with the cinnamon and salt, and stir until the apples and nuts are evenly coated with spice. Place the dish in the oven, and bake for 30-45 minutes, or until the apples are nice and tender. Check in every 15 minutes while baking to give the apples a stir.

Remove the apples from the oven, and stir in the raisins and brown rice.

Yields 4 servings

Extra Notes:

- Cooking times: Feel free to experiment with the cooking temp and time a bit on this recipe. My apples were perfect after 40 minutes, baked at 350°F. This is the maximum temperature I recommend when baking with coconut oil.
- Apples: Do not peel the apples, as the peel contains a good deal of fiber and nutrients. Plus, since this is a breakfast dish (rather than dessert), the delicateness of peeled apples is not required.
- Organic: Try to go for organic apples and raisins, which rank high on the pesticide load scale.
- Cooking Brown Rice: You may choose to use any type of brown rice, but in general, cook every 1 cup of dry rice in a generous 2 cups of water. I also add a pinch of salt and at least one teaspoon of oil per cup of rice. This tends to improve results dramatically.