

# Vegan Cannoli with Dairy-Free Ancho "Cream Cheese"

When I asked to feature a "Chef's Pick" dessert recipe from the February issue of the Vegan Culinary Experience, Chef Jason Wyrick selected this decadent recipe. I know, we are well past February, but I couldn't let this recipe simply slip away (plus, you can still access the February issue and all of its wonderful recipes). This is by no means a quick and easy recipe, but those who are up for a pastry challenge will be greatly rewarded. That said, what I love about multi-part recipes is the ability to simply use one of the "parts" in another, more simplistic recipe. Perhaps making and freezing several of those homemade cannoli shells, or filling won ton wrappers with that sweet ancho filling. Just in case you aren't familiar with anchos, they are the dried form of the mild poblano peppers (infamous for their use in chili rellenos). Now onto the recipe ...

## Cannoli with Ancho Cream Cheese

Recipe reprinted with permissions from the Vegan Culinary Experience

Type: Dessert

Serves: 8

Time to Prepare: 60 minutes

### Ingredients

#### The shells&hellip;

½ cup + 2 tbsp. of soy creamer

1 ½ tsp. maple syrup

¼ cup + 1 tbsp. raw sugar crystals

2 tbsp. canola oil

1/8 tsp. salt

½ tsp. vanilla extract

1/4 tsp. EnerG Egg Replacer

1 ½ cups of flour + more as needed

Canola oil for frying

#### The filling&hellip;

2 anchos, rehydrated and minced

12 oz. of Better than Cream Cheese

3 tbsp. sweet agave nectar

#### The prickly pear cactus&hellip;

4 prickly pear cactus fruits, sliced

#### Finishing ingredients&hellip;

Sweet agave nectar

3 tbsp. toasted pine nuts

1 tbsp. powdered sugar

### Instructions

Start by making the dough for the shells&hellip;

In a metal bowl, combine the flour, sugar, and salt.

In a blender, combine the rest of the ingredients.

Blend them for about 1 minute until they are well emulsified.

Add the liquid to the dry ingredients and mix well.

Once the wet and dry ingredients form a dough, you can add more flour to make the dough tighter (it should feel like a soft bread dough.)

Don't over knead the dough.

Let the dough sit for about 15 minutes.

On a floured surface, roll out the dough until it is about 1/16 of an inch.

Cut out 4 inch circles.

Wrap the circles around the cannoli forms.

Wet your finger and run it along the seam of the wrap and press down gently to seal the wrap.

Set up a deep fryer or wok and fill it with oil until it will cover the shells.

Turn it up to medium high.

With a set of tongs, drop the wrapped cannoli form into the oil.  
Fry it until it is a light golden color and immediately remove it.  
Set it on a paper towel to drain the oil.  
Repeat with the other wrapped cannoli forms.

Making the filling&hellip;

Fill up a small pot with water.

Turn it to medium low.

While it is heating, deseed the anchos by removing the top stem and shaking out the seeds through the hole that is created.

Place the anchos in the water and rehydrate them.

They should turn a lighter color and the skin should smooth out.

While they are rehydrating, place the Better than Cream Cheese and sweet agave nectar in a blender.

Blend them on high for at least one minute.

Alternatively, you can place the Better than Cream Cheese and sweet agave nectar in a narrow, tall, metal bowl and use an immersion blender on it.

Pump the immersion blender up and down to fluff up the filling.

Once the anchos have rehydrated, mince them very small.

Stir the mince into the filling.

Alternatively, you can blend it in.

Preparing the cactus fruit&hellip;

Slice the cactus fruit so that you have slices about 1/8 of an inch.

Lightly oil a sauté pan.

Heat the pan up to a medium heat.

Sauté the prickly pear fruit for about two minutes or until you see the colors smooth out.

Place them on the plate, two or three per plate.

Toasting the pine nuts&hellip;

In a sauté pan, toast the pine nuts on a medium heat until they start to develop light brown spots on them.

This should only take 2 or 3 minutes.

Set them aside.

Filling the cannoli&hellip;

Place the filling in a piping bag (see Chef&rsquo;s Notes for a cheat).

Attach a wide star-shaped tip.

Pipe the filling into the cannoli shell until it is filled.

The setup&hellip;

Arrange the prickly pear fruit on the plate.

Lay the stuffed cannoli against the fruit.

Drizzle sweet agave nectar across the plate, the cannoli, and the fruit.

Sift a little bit of powdered sugar across the plate.

Sprinkle some of the pine nuts around the plate.

## Kitchen Equipment

2 or 3 Metal Bowls

Rolling Pin

A Knife or Large Ramekin to Cut the Dough

Blender

Piping Bag with Star Shaped Tip

2 Sauté Pans

Spatula for the Prickly Pear Fruit

Chef&rsquo;s Knife

Measuring Cups

Measuring Spoons

Whisk

Wok or Deep Fryer

Sifter

## Presentation

When arranging the prickly pear fruit slices, spread them on top of each other instead of just placing them side by side or stacked right on top of each other. Lay the cannoli against the fruit. Take the bottle of sweet agave nectar and quickly

move it from side to side to make the lines. This works if it has the squeeze tip. If it doesn't, put the sweet agave nectar on a spoon and do it that way. Put the powdered sugar on before the pine nuts so they give a nice contrast against the whiteness of the sugar.

### Time Management

These take awhile to make and are fairly labor intensive. However, the shells and filling can be made ahead of time. If you make the shells ahead of time, serve this as a chilled dessert. The pine nuts and the prickly pear fruit definitely need to be served fresh. Start with the dough. Get the anchos rehydrated while the dough is resting. Get the filling ready after that. Once you are done with that, roll out the dough and make the shells. While they cool, you can toast the pine nuts and get the fruit sautéed. After that, they are quick to put together.

### Complimentary Food and Drinks

This goes very well with a nice Riesling or even a lightly flavored cider like a pear cider.

### Where to Shop

Anchos can sometimes be found prepackaged in gourmet food stores. However, the best place to shop is one that has a preponderance of Mexican foods. Anchos can often be found there in bulk bins. Note that they are often mislabeled as pasilla peppers. The pepper should be very, very dark, dry, and the skin should be shriveled. The Better than Cream Cheese, EnerG Egg Replacer, and sweet agave nectar are most easily found at places like Whole Foods and Wild Oats. Pine nuts can be found at most places, including Costco. The rest of the ingredients can easily be found at the local supermarket.

### How It Works

The dough is tight enough so that it does not fall apart when it is deep fried, but soft enough so that it creates a lightly crisped shell. Using the immersion blender on the filling fluffs it up, making it lighter. There are several different types and levels of sweetness in the dessert. The filling is slightly sweet and the anchos have their own sweetness to them. The shells are fairly sweet, but not cloyingly sweet. The cactus fruit has a little bit of sweetness, but is more astringent. Putting some of the sweet agave nectar on top of the fruit helps that. Lastly, the powdered sugar adds sprinkles of intense sweetness to the dish. The prickly pear fruit is there to give the dessert a beautiful color contrast and a contrast in taste with its astringency. It also gives people something to talk about as most people have not tried it before. The anchos are there to add another flavor most people don't associate with dessert, which is a chili flavor, making the dish even better because of its uniqueness.

### Chef's Notes

This recipe requires a lot of setup, but once everything is prepped, it goes very quickly. That's why this dessert is best when made for 6 to 10 people instead of 2 or 3. This is also a particularly fun dish to make with friends as each person can be in the kitchen with their own job (one person can do the filling, one person prep the dough, etc.).

### Nutritional Facts (individual servings in parentheses)

Calories 2268 (283)  
Calories from Fat 864 (108)  
Fat 96g (12g)  
Total Carbohydrates 351g (44g)  
Dietary Fiber 21g (2.5g)  
Sugars 172g (21.5g)  
Protein 29g (3.5g)  
Salt 285mg (36mg)

Vitamin A 138% (17%)  
Vitamin B6 60% (7.5%)  
Vitamin C 70% (8.5%)  
Calcium 19% (2%)  
Iron 21% (2.5%)  
Thiamin 106% (13%)  
Riboflavin 98% (12%)  
Niacin 64% (8%)  
Folate 84% (10.5%)  
Phosphorous 26% (3%)  
Potassium 42% (5%)

Zinc 10% (1%)  
Magnesium 81% (10%)  
Copper 22% (2.5%)

\* This recipe is by no means healthy, but it is healthier than a regular dairy-based cannoli. I also think it's important to treat ourselves to some decadence occasionally.

#### Interesting Facts

Anchos are the dried form of the poblano pepper, which is the pepper used in chili rellenos. In Spanish, ancho means "wide".  
The cannoli originated in Sicily.

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