

Sweet Sundays: Raw for Dessert

It seems that raw foods are all the rage these days, at least in health-conscious circles and for more open-minded foodies. It can be a proposition that's a bit difficult to swallow, whether you follow the guidelines in full or attempt a diet of partially raw edibles and cooked dishes, due to difficulty more than anything else. Preparing a few simple snacks such as crackers or cookies? No problem, only it will take you at least half a day to dehydrate anything to the point of approaching crispiness. Craving something comforting like meatloaf or veggie burgers? Easy enough to fix, but you may just need to hunt down rare, hard to find ingredients online.

The worst offenders, however, tend to be the desserts. Typically requiring crazy equipment, expensive ingredients, and up to two days of waiting before you can even take the first bite, it's hard for this die-hard baker to fully embrace such a diet. That doesn't mean I would snub a whole wide universe of vegan food, simply based on the concept of applying no heat above 110 degrees. Always eager to try new things, I was excited to get my hands on a promising new book called *Raw for Dessert*, by Jennifer Cornbleet ...

Ranging from your standard raw fruit desserts to more elaborate ice cream sundaes and layer cakes, you definitely have a good variety to choose from. Skipping over the simpler fare and diving right into- What else?- The ice cream section, I quickly decided that the Cookies and Creme Ice Cream was an absolute must-make.

Made from a base of brazil nuts, cashews, and agave, this frozen treat is nothing if not rich. Chunks of raw chocolate pie crust are mixed in at the last moment for the "cookies," and even your seasoned ice cream pro might be fooled into thinking that this was a traditional treat. Surprisingly not as nutty as I had expected it to taste, a quality vanilla extract can really shine and lend a great depth of flavor here. Best served within a few days, lest it become too hard to scoop, the texture is perfectly creamy, accented nicely with an occasional chocolatey crunch. I would gladly make this one again, and again, and again.

Unfortunately, the Mint Ice Cream wasn't nearly as big a hit. What I would have given for just a touch more sweetness, and just a bit more mint flavor! Although the color was a gorgeous, natural green, that was about the only vibrant thing about it.

Nuts about coconut? I sure am, and I was pleased as punch to see that it gets plenty of usage throughout this book. Wanting to focus on the fresh flavors of whole coconut, the Coconut Creme Pie sounded like a perfect showcase. Making mine into individual mini pies, it was only a matter of blending, forming the crust into tins, and blending some more, before a brief chill and all was done. Delightfully smooth and creamy, with nothing to impede the pure coconut essence, it's hard to believe these were created without the aid of any heat, or refined sugars even!

Finishing off my trial run with a bang, it seemed only right to test the waters for a true chocoholic. Terribly curious as to what a raw Chocolate Lava Cake might taste like, I whipped out that raw cacao powder and bag of walnuts faster than you could preheat an oven. This is one simple yet incredibly impressive dessert that may very well convert full-fledged carnivores to the idea of raw foodism. Deeply chocolaty and fudgy all around, breaking into the flowing center is like opening up a sweetly wrapped present, to discover jewels inside. If you were to only make this one dessert in the whole book, it would still be worth the price.

Happily, all you need to make such desserts is just a sturdy blender or food processor, no fancy dehydrator required. I would argue that it could use a few more pictures, as only a couple of centerfolds are scattered throughout, but then I am a bit spoiled when it comes to cookbook photography. Clear instructions make each recipe a breeze to follow, and although almost all require serious servings of raw nuts, often making for a very expensive, high-fat venture, I would argue that it's nothing outrageous for a healthier, yet still truly decadent dessert. This is a third party review by Hannah Kaminsky, author of *My Sweet Vegan*. To purchase, *Raw for Dessert* is available on Amazon. For more Book Reviews, see the [Go Dairy Free Product Reviews](http://www.godairyfree.org).