



Chocolate Avocado Budino (Rich Italian Chocolate Mousse Pudding)

2 ripe avocados, peeled, pitted

6 Tablespoons honey

1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 teaspoon almond extract

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Dash red cayenne pepper to taste

4 ounces dark chocolate or chocolate chips, melted

1 teaspoon grated orange peel, optional

1 cup whipped cream

1 ounce grated dark chocolate

Garnish as desired: with additional whipped cream; chopped pecans, salt flakes, sweet cherries

In food processor, combine peeled and pitted avocados, honey, cocoa, vanilla, almond extract, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper until smooth. Add melted chocolate and orange peel, process until mixture is very smooth.

Place chocolate mixture in large bowl, fold in whipped cream until mousse consistency, fold in grated dark chocolate. Spoon into 4 custard dessert cups or ramekins. Cover the surface of pudding with plastic wrap; chill in refrigerator for about 3 hours or ready to serve.

To serve: Remove plastic wrap from top. Garnish with dollops of whipped cream if desired. Sprinkle with chopped pecans, salt flakes, and top each with a sweet cherry.
Yield: 4 chocolate mousse desserts

Recipe inspired by: The Vegetable Butcher, Cara Mangini; Workman Publishing, New York.

Cook's Note: A long time ago, I made a brownie that used an avocado in place of butter, and it was delicious. I was excited to make this recipe for chocolate pudding, and it was delightful. You can flavor it with your favorite extract or fruit. Loving chocolate, I added some additional grated chocolate to the finished pudding.

About the Recipe: The pudding has a silky smooth consistency that is rich and full of that addictive chocolate flavor. I loved the idea that I could use different flavors and create lots of easy desserts using this basic recipe. The cinnamon and touch of pepper gives this chocolate pudding a sweet and spicy flavor.