

# SPICE OF THE MONTH CLUB

December 2022

## Join us to discuss

*Tuesday, 12/27 / 6:00pm / Conference Room*

Spend the month cooking with your spice and join us to discuss your opinions, experiences, and recipes!



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## This month's "spice": Stevia

### History

Stevia is native to Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina. Stevia leaves appear to have been used medicinally and as a sweet by the Guaraní tribe long before Europeans came to the Americas. Stevia was first researched by Petrus Jacobus Stevus, a 16th-century Spanish botanist whom the plant is named after.

The later so-called discovery of stevia and identification of its use as a sweetener has been attributed to a South American natural scientist, Moises Santiago Bertoni, who identified it in 1887; his name now appears in the botanical name that identifies the variety used in food.

### Use

The first and most important thing to remember about stevia is that although its sweetness is heat stable and won't deteriorate during cooking, it does not caramelize like sugar. As a result, it cannot be used to make meringues or other recipes that depend on large quantities of sugar. But using homemade stevia extract to sweetened beverages, sauces, muffins, ice cream, cheesecakes, and rice puddings is quite feasible. When using stevia powders, it is best to be guided by the sugar equivalent given on the package.

**Note:** for our Stevia, 1 packet is equal to 2 teaspoons of sugar in sweetness.



# Sugar Free New York Style Cheesecake

*Yields 16 servings.*

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 tsp stevia (or to taste)
  - 2 eggs
  - 2 egg whites
  - 2 tbsp cornstarch
  - 3 8oz packages cream cheese, softened
  - 1 cup sour cream
  - 2 tsp vanilla
  - 2 vanilla beans, scraped
- ## CRUST:
- 8 oz whole pecans, grounds
  - 1 1/2 tbsp butter, softened
  - 1 tbsp flour



## STEPS:

1. Grind the pecans, mix with butter and flour (just helps to hold together, but you don't need it). Put into 9in springform pan.
2. In a bowl beat cream cheese, sour cream, vanilla, stevia until fluffy (this is the point I do the tasting to see if it may need more stevia, everyone's taste is different so add a little at a time 'til you find what tastes good to you.)
3. Beat in eggs, egg whites and cornstarch. Pour mixture over crust into springform pan. Bake at 300 degrees F until firm in center (45-60 minutes) refrigerate overnight.

## Variations:

**Key Lime:** Zest and juice 5 key limes (smaller than regular limes) plus another 3 tbsp of lime juice, omit the vanilla beans if you like. Add at the beginning; add more at stevia tasting if more is needed.

**Chocolate:** Use almonds instead of pecans for the crust. Omit the egg whites and increase eggs to three total. Add 1/2 cup Dutch cocoa.

# Stevia Ice Cream

*Yields 4 servings.*

## INGREDIENTS:

2 eggs

2 cups light cream (can use heavy if desired)

2 cup skim milk (can use whole and other varieties)

1/2 tsp. stevia

1-2 tsp. extracts of choice (optional) (vanilla, peppermint...)

4oz. unsweetened baking chocolate (optional)

Nuts, berries (prefrozen preferred) as desired



## STEPS:

1. Beat the eggs...beat in the cream, then the milk...beat in the stevia.

Remember to mix the stevia well; it gets funny with fatty ingredients.

Add extracts.

2. Pour the mix into the machine and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Add nuts and berries when the mix is nearly ice cream.

For chocolate chips: Melt the chocolate before the ice cream reaches the lip.

Add 1/4 tsp stevia, stir well. Add to the ice cream when it's reached the top; the chocolate should be warm enough to flow and make little blebs, but not so hot that it's turning it all back to milk--melt, wait 5 minutes, add.

## Spelt Stevia Muffins

I love being able to make sugar-free muffins for children, because their diet invariably has more sugar in it than it should. Stevia sweeteners are now widely available and are excellent for baking. And spelt flour is a lot more wholesome and flavorsome than regular flour. It is worth looking for in your supermarket or health-food store.

Makes  
12 muffins

**Preparation time:**  
10 minutes

**Cooking time:**  
20 minutes

### Tip

If you can't find self-rising flour in stores, you can make your own. To equal 1 cup (250 mL) self-rising flour, combine 1 cup (250 mL) all-purpose flour, 1½ tsp (7 mL) baking powder and ½ tsp (2 mL) salt.

- 12-cup muffin pan, greased
- Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C)

2 cups	self-rising flour (see Tip, left)	500 mL
1 cup	spelt flour	250 mL
½ tsp	baking soda	2 mL
½ tsp	baking powder	2 mL
¼ cup	stevia powder/sweetener	60 mL
¼ cup	butter, melted	60 mL
2	eggs, beaten	2
1 tsp	pure vanilla extract	5 mL
1 cup	milk	250 mL
½ cup	mashed ripe banana (1 small)	125 mL
1 cup	blueberries (fresh or frozen)	250 mL

1. In a large bowl, combine self-rising flour, spelt flour, baking soda, baking powder and stevia.
2. In a small bowl, combine butter, eggs, vanilla, milk and banana. Stir well.
3. Pour wet mixture into dry mixture, add blueberries and stir until smooth. Divide batter equally among prepared muffin cups (fill to just below top), then bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes, until browned and tops are firm to the touch. Remove from oven and set aside to cool in pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days. To freeze, cool completely, then transfer to resealable bags and freeze for up to 3 months.