

Warning! These delicacies are addictive! One taste and you'll agree they're irresistible. These can be prepared several days ahead or even a week ahead. In past years, we've prepared these treats as gifts at holiday time.

An ideal gift for special friends at holiday time or simply an extra special treat to serve on a dessert table, these nutty delights can be made well in advance of the holiday rush. They're good keepers if you store them in airtight containers.

The success of this recipe depends on measuring out all ingredients in advance. It actually comes together quickly once you have everything ready.

SUGARPLUM SPICED NUTS

Yield: 3 1/2 cups (840 ml)

1/4 cup (120 ml) powdered sugar

Spice Mixture

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

2 teaspoons ground cloves

2 teaspoons ground allspice

2 teaspoons ground nutmeg

2 teaspoons ground cardamom

2 teaspoons ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper

1/4 teaspoon salt

Coating

1 tablespoon organic canola oil

1/3 cup (80 ml) evaporated cane juice

3/4 cup (180 ml) rum or apple juice

3 cups (720 ml) coarsely chopped walnuts

1. Place the powdered sugar into a medium bowl and set it aside.
2. To make the spice mixture, combine the cinnamon, cloves, allspice, nutmeg, cardamom, ginger, cayenne, and salt in a small bowl or cup. Stir the mixture well and set it aside near the stove.
3. To make the coating, pour the canola oil into a large, non-stick skillet. Place the evaporated cane juice, rum, and walnuts in separate cups or bowls and set them aside near the skillet. Now you're ready to begin.
4. Heat the canola oil over high heat for about 1 minute. Add the evaporated cane juice and stir another minute until hot and bubbly.
5. Pour in the rum and stir constantly for about 1 minute, until the sugar is completely dissolved.

6. Quickly stir in the walnuts and continue stirring over high heat until all the liquid evaporates and the mixture becomes sticky and shiny. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes longer, or until all the liquid is absorbed.
 7. Sprinkle in 2 tablespoons of the spice mixture and toss to coat the walnuts, stirring for 1 minute. Turn off the heat and add the remaining spice mixture, tossing continuously.
 8. Pour the spiced walnuts into the bowl with the powdered sugar and toss to give them a white dusting. Spread the walnuts in a single layer on a large dish or baking sheet to cool completely. Stored in an airtight container at room temperature, Sugarplum Spiced Nuts will keep up to one month.
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