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(crave)

ACCORDING
TO DEVIN
ALEXANDER:

**'FLAVOR
COMES
FIRST
AND
CALORIES
SECOND.'**

**DIET
WITH
DECADENCE**



bowl; pour evenly over hummus and smooth with the back of a spoon to form a second layer. Sprinkle evenly with cucumbers. Mix tomatoes, parsley, lemon juice, garlic and salt in a medium bowl. Sprinkle tomato mixture over cucumbers, followed by red onion, feta and olives.

Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 1 to 6 hours. Serve with pita triangles for dipping. Makes about 3 1/2 cups dip, about 18 servings. Each 1/3 pita circle with 3 tablespoons dip has 97 calories, 3 grams fat, 5 grams protein, 15 grams carbohydrate, 270 milligrams sodium.

CHOCOLATE NOT-ONLY-IN-YOUR-DREAMS CAKE

I dreamed about eating a cake like this for years. This simple-to-make cake is extremely rich, and I love it more than any other flourless chocolate espresso cake I've had. To impress friends, keep some, unbaked, in your freezer, stored in the ramekins in an airtight container. When you need dessert without any fuss, pop them in the water bath and bake (you'll need to add about 10 minutes to the baking time). Be sure to grind the espresso finely. The coffee is here only to deepen the chocolate flavor; it's not a mocha cake. Not only do I just love the taste, but it packs six grams fiber, so it really comes without the guilt!

Butter-flavored cooking spray

1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce

1 teaspoon vanilla

4 large egg whites

1 cup brown sugar (not packed)

3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

1/4 teaspoon very finely ground espresso beans

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon powdered sugar

4 raspberries, optional

Generously mist 4 (3 1/2-inch diameter) ramekins with cooking spray. Place side by side in an 8x8-inch baking pan. Add water to pan until it reaches halfway up sides of ramekins.

Using a sturdy whisk or spatula, mix together applesauce, vanilla, egg whites and brown sugar in a large mixing bowl until well combined. Stir in cocoa powder, espresso and salt until just combined and no lumps remain. Divide evenly among ramekins (each will be about 2/3 full).

Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven about 21 to 24 minutes, until tops look silky and puff slightly and a toothpick inserted in center comes out a bit wet. Remove from oven and carefully transfer ramekins from water bath to a cooling rack. Cool about 10 minutes. Then invert each ramekin onto a dessert plate. Let stand 1 minute, and slowly lift off ramekin (cakes should come out on their own, but if they don't, run a knife around edge of cakes to loosen them). Cool another 5 to 10 minutes. Using a fine sieve evenly dust each cake with a light sprinkling of powdered sugar. Place one raspberry on center of each cake. Serve immediately. Makes 4 cakes, 4 servings. Each contains 203 calories, 2 grams fat, 7 grams protein, 46 grams carbohydrate, 364 milligrams sodium.

DECADENT

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foods I love. Up until then, I looked at diets as all or nothing. It was the whole starve-binge mentality that I was doing. I was either on a diet or eating garbage — which is what most people do.”

She abandoned dieting, cut 200 to 300 calories a day from her eating, became motivated and within a year had lost 25 pounds.

“When I decided I would never go on another diet, I lost the weight.” By the time she was 22, she had lost 55 pounds total.

After moving to Los Angeles 15 years ago, she attended culinary school and ended up in the food business, owning a healthy-cuisine catering company, cooking for celebrities and teaching private cooking classes.

A column she wrote for

Muscle & Fitness resulted in her first cookbook, “Fast Food Fix,” with 75 recipes showing how to make healthier taste-and look-alike versions of Big Macs, Cinnabons and other food favorites. She made frequent television appearances featuring healthy food makeovers and was a consultant to the “The Biggest Loser,” helping show contestants make over their favorite foods. Her second book, “The Biggest Loser Cookbook,” was developed to accompany the show.

She landed her own half-hour cooking show, “Healthy Decadence With Devin Alexander,” which began airing in March 2007 on Discovery Health and FitTV — and to date she’s filmed 18 episodes. Currently, she’s also a spokeswoman for

Weight Watchers Smart Ones Frozen Meals.

These days, Alexander eats five 300-to-400-calorie meals a day, not differentiating between meals and snacks. If she has a bit larger meal, she opts for a smaller snack. For chocolate cravings, she makes and eats Chocolate Chip Pancakes, Dark Chocolate Layer Cake With Buttercream Frosting and Chocolate Not-Only-in-Your-Dreams Cake. The latter, baked in individual ramekins and similar to a lava cake, “is totally gooey and as rich as they come. I love it more than any other flourless chocolate espresso cake I’ve had. I make and eat it at least once a week.”

The bottom line is that calories *do* count.

“My goal is to eat normal-

to big-size portions of food that is truly decadent. With diets, people often put together low-fat ingredients that taste terrible (and ignore flavor).

“I’m not a tofu and carrot-stick chef,” she says with a laugh, adding that she doesn’t use strange noodles and combine fat-free mayonnaise with fat-free cheese.

“I really push and find options that taste like the real stuff.”

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STRAWBERRY



CHILDREN 3