

perfect party treats

December foods are known for being sweet, decadent, rich and plenty of other things, but healthy isn't one of them. Thankfully, we know two bloggers who beg to differ, mixing their seasonal sweets with health-conscious alternatives and nutritious toppings. Oh, and they're both approved for gift giving, are easily portable and would look excellent on a festive party spread.

cranberry pistachio chocolate bark

Samantha Seeley, author of the blog Sweet Remedy at sweet-remedy.com, knows chocolate bark is great for goodie bags at parties or easy gifts for friends and co-workers. Add antioxidant-rich cranberries and pistachios (which are loaded with vitamins and minerals) and you'll make your friends feel better, too.

You'll need...

- 1 12-oz package of semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup pistachios, chopped
- ½ cup dried cranberries

Line a baking sheet with parchment or wax paper. **Melt chocolate in the microwave, heating in 30 second intervals and stirring in between.** Spread melted chocolate on prepared baking sheet. **Sprinkle chopped pistachios and dried cranberries on top.** Put into fridge to set. **Once firm, remove from fridge and break apart into pieces.**

Recipe and photo courtesy of Samantha Seeley, sweet-remedy.com.

just beet it 5-ingredient red velvet fudge

Fudge is the perfect party treat, and it appeals to just about everyone. Unfortunately, it's not known for its health benefits. This red velvet version from Ashley Melillo of blissfulbasil.com clears all that up, with all-natural food coloring from beets and whole ingredients.

You'll need...

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| 1 medium beet, stem cut and thoroughly washed | 3½ tbsp pure maple syrup |
| 1 cup coconut butter | 2 tbsp raw cacao powder |
| | 1 tsp pure vanilla extract |

Makes 12 to 14 pieces. **Quarter the beet, and run through a juicer.** If you don't have a juicer, blend and place the pulp in cheese cloth, squeezing out the juice. **Retain 1/4 cup beet juice for the recipe.** Add coconut butter, 1/4 cup beet juice, pure maple syrup, raw cacao powder and vanilla extract to small sauce pan over low heat. **Stir continuously for 4 to 5 minutes or until the coconut butter has melted and mixture is smooth and glossy.** Pour the mixture into a 3x5-inch container that has been greased with coconut oil. **Refrigerate for 2 to 3 hours or until completely set.** Pop the fudge out of the pan, and slice it into squares. **Store fudge in refrigerator until serving.**

Recipe and photo courtesy of Ashley Melillo, blissfulbasil.com.

