



'Healthy Dish' columnist Michelle Dudash has created an antioxidant-rich, dark-chocolate treat recipe. H2



For fitness advice, check out the blogs of Kim Miller, a runner and mom, at azcvoices.com.

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Chocolate treat won't cause guilt



MICHELLE DUDASH
HEALTHY DISH

Recently, I put myself on a diet low in refined starches and sugars. While my nightly square of dark chocolate is nice, it becomes mo-

notonous. This recipe that I created includes good-quality, antioxidant-rich dark chocolate, plus toasted pecans and honey for a chocolate turtlesque treat. Pistachios add an appealing splash of green, and tart cherries balance out the richness. Feel free to mix things up with your own combination of fruit and nuts, such as raisins and peanuts or dates and walnuts.

Michelle Dudash of Scottsdale is a registered dietitian and Le Cordon Bleu-trained chef. Find a link to her blog, Dudash's Healthy Dish, at azcvoices.com.

Salted Dark Chocolate Fruit and Nut Clusters

From Michelle Dudash

30 pecan halves
1 bar, 3.25 ounces, high-quality dark chocolate, chopped into chip-size pieces
20 pistachios, shelled
20 dried tart cherries
Honey
Flaked sea salt

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Place pecans on a sheet pan and bake for 13-15 minutes, until aromatic and a shade darker, with a crunchy texture. Cool. Crush 10 pecans in a small bowl using the bottom of a measuring cup.

Line another sheet pan with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.

Place the chocolate pieces in a bowl and microwave in 30-second increments, stirring well after each time to redistribute the heat. Once 75 percent of the chocolate is melted, stir until the remaining chocolate is melted and smooth. The more you stir, the better. Stick a clean finger (or a thermometer) into the chocolate to test to see if it is 90 degrees or just slightly lower (that's about 8 degrees lower than body temperature). If it's still too warm, let it rest a few minutes and stir some more.



Nuts and cherries add nutrition to dark chocolate. MICHELLE DUDASH

Once you think your chocolate is the right temperature, test it by dipping a knife into it and putting the knife in the refrigerator. If after 1-2 minutes, it is slightly shiny and not sticky, speckled, or streaked, then you have properly tempered chocolate.

Sprinkle the crushed pecans in 20 evenly spaced little piles on the lined sheet pan and spread each out to circles slightly larger than a quarter. Using a teaspoon measure, scoop the tempered chocolate onto the crushed pecan circles. Place a cherry and a pistachio in the middle, followed by a whole

pecan angled on top. Squeeze a drop of honey onto the tip of each pecan and sprinkle on a few salt flakes. Allow chocolate to set until completely firm. Carefully remove chocolates with a knife or small offset spatula and store in an airtight container in a cool area.

Makes 20 servings.

Approximate values per serving: 53 calories, 4 g total fat (1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 7 mg sodium, 0 mg cholesterol, 5 g total carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 1 g protein.