

NUTRITION NEWS

Almonds: Handy Nutrition In A Nutshell

(NAPSA)—When it comes to making smart food choices, handy and healthy can sometimes go hand in hand. For instance, almonds are a crunchy favorite; convenient and versatile, as well as nutritious.

“Almonds are a handy food. I love to sprinkle a handful of almonds on a green salad or in a rice dish, or crunch on them as a mid-afternoon snack,” says Sandra Lee, host of the Food Network’s “Semi-Homemade Cooking with Sandra Lee.”

“Whether I’m making an Italian-inspired dessert or a Southeast Asian stir-fry, almonds always come in handy,” she adds.

Almonds may be particularly handy for health-conscious people. The government’s new *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* names almonds as one of the leading whole-food sources of vitamin E. An ounce of almonds a day has also been shown to lower LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol levels—and emerging research shows they may also play an important role in maintaining and even losing weight.

Lee suggests grabbing a handy handful of almonds today, or trying them in the delicious recipe below.

Maple-Ricotta Parfaits With Almonds & Plums

- 1 tablespoon butter
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup maple syrup, divided
- 6 black plums, pitted and sliced
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups part-skim ricotta cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced almonds, roasted



Plums work well in these parfaits, though three to four pears would, too.

To roast sliced almonds:

Spread in an ungreased baking pan. Place in 350°F oven and bake 5 to 6 minutes or until golden brown and fragrant; stir once or twice to assure even browning. Note that almonds will continue to roast slightly after removing from oven.

Heat butter in a sauté pan. Add 2 tablespoons maple syrup, and gently stir in plum slices. Cook on medium heat just until plums are soft and giving out some juice, but still holding their shape. Meanwhile, stir together $\frac{1}{2}$ cup maple syrup and ricotta; set aside.

Divide $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plum slices among 4 clear bowls or brandy glasses. Follow with ricotta, and then remaining plum slices. Drizzle with remaining maple syrup, and sprinkle with almonds. Serves 4.

Visit www.AlmondsAreIn.com for Maple-Ricotta Parfaits nutritional information and more tasty, handy and nutritious recipes.