



EASY AS PIE THANKSGIVING PREP

with Ricki Heller

DAY THREE: SU-WEET! DESSERTS AND DRINKS

Here are my most important tips about desserts:

One of the best things you can do to put people at ease—and prove to them that your healthy food CAN taste great—is to bring a dessert that everyone can share.

What to do for Baked Goods: When it comes to baked cookies, cakes, pies, etc., you'll need to replace sugar, flour (because of the gluten), eggs and dairy. That may be a bit much for you to learn--*all before Thanksgiving!*

So, don't take it upon yourself to re-create your favorites. **When you first start out, it's best to rely on experts whose recipes you trust to find some foolproof recipes and use those.** (Don't worry, I've got ya covered).

What to do for simpler desserts: If you need to replace only one or two ingredients (such as in pudding, whipped cream or beverages), you can usually just swap out the sugar for xylitol or stevia. Here's how to decide which sweetener to use.

Stevia: the sweetness in this natural herbal sweetener is so concentrated that it's up to 100x sweeter than sugar.

Best for: drinks, salad dressings, porridge, puddings, whipped cream and other non-baked goods.

Watch out for: Some people report a "metallic" or bitter taste with stevia. I've discovered that it depends on the brand. My favorite is NuNaturals (no aftertaste!!) and SweetLeaf (some great flavors). Get pure stevia extract without any additives or fillers. About 5 drops of the liquid is equal to one teaspoon (5 ml) sugar.

Final word: With stevia, my mantra is "less is more." There's a fine line between the perfect amount and way too much sweetness. So start light and add one drop at a time until you achieve the desired sweetness.

Xylitol: This is a naturally-occurring sugar alcohol (which, ironically, is neither a real sugar nor an alcohol!). It's great for candida because it doesn't raise blood sugar (low GI), it tastes just like sugar and because our bodies can't absorb 100% of the calories in it, it has about 40% fewer calories than sugar.

Best for: xylitol can be used pretty much anywhere you'd use sugar. It isn't bitter and has a very neutral sweetness. I like it in cheesecakes, cookies, cakes—wherever I'd normally use sugar.

Watch out for: Because our bodies don't produce a lot of the enzyme needed to digest xylitol, it can cause gas and bloating when first eaten. Over time, though, we do produce more if we continue to consume it. So start with just a wee bit in something, see how you do, and increase over time.

Also, while it looks like a coarse sugar, the granules in xylitol don't easily dissolve when mixed into a batter. So, for best results, either grind it to a powder first (in a coffee grinder or blender), or mix it with your wet ingredients so that it dissolves before you mix it with everything else.

Final word: Xylitol is a great ACD sweetener overall. Not only is it safe for someone on the ACD because it doesn't spike blood sugar levels; xylitol actually helps to inhibit the growth of candida.

Of course, there are other sweeteners you can use, and as you become familiar with them, you'll find that your repertoire expands. But to start out, these are my two "go-tos."

Here are my most important tips about drinks:

It may be tough to think about not drinking alcohol or sugary beverages while everyone else indulges, but there are still ways to feel as if your drink is festive (and so that it doesn't stand out from everyone else's, too).

- *Unsweetened cranberry juice (only 100% juice!) is great.* It looks (sort of) like wine, and you can dilute it and then add your sweetener of choice. One of my favorite simple drinks is half cranberry juice and half sparkling mineral water. It looks great in a champagne flute or wine glass—people will just assume it's some new cocktail they haven't heard of!
- *Sparkling water and a slice of lemon or lime can get you through an evening, too.* Or drink it out of a tumbler with ice. People will assume it's a cocktail and won't ask you about it.
- *For creamy beverages,* you can whip up a smoothie or shake using ACD-friendly ingredients and sip on that through the evening (this works best when you're the host/hostess, of course).

In reality, it will be extremely rare for anyone to even notice what you drink, let alone comment on it. At most holidays, if you have a drink in your hand, that's all that's needed for everyone to feel like they're taking part in the celebration.

Here are some recipes that could work as Thanksgiving desserts and drinks:

[Faux Kombucha](#) is one of my all-time favorite festive drinks (good for all stages)

[Chestnut Spice Latte](#) (good for all stages)

[Chai Carob Latte](#) (good for all stages)

[Vegan & Grain-Free Pumpkin Pie](#) (good for all stages)

[Pumpkin Fudge](#) (good for all stages)

[Carob Fudge](#) (good for all stages)

[Peppermint Nanaimo Bars](#) (good for all stages)

[Cranberry Ice Cream](#) (good for all stages)

[Cinnamon Spiced Coconut Bark](#) (good for all stages)

Do you have other questions around replacements? Share them in [the Facebook group](#), and be sure to use the hashtag #easyaspie !