

## Sticky Date, Maple and Walnut Pudding

1½ cups chopped dates  
1 tsp vanilla essence  
1 tsp baking soda  
½ cup soft brown sugar (firmly packed)  
1 cup self-raising flour, sifted  
½ cup wholemeal flour  
1 tsp baking powder  
1 apple grated  
⅓ cup chopped walnuts  
⅓ cup canola oil  
¼ cup milk  
2 eggs  
¼ cup maple syrup

Place dates with 1½ cups (375ml) water in a saucepan. Bring to the boil then reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes or until soft. Stir in vanilla and baking soda and then set aside to cool to room temperature. Puree.

Place sugar, flours, baking powder, grated apple and walnuts in a bowl. Mix oil, milk and eggs together and add to flour mixture along with pureed dates. Mix until blended (do not overmix as this will toughen the pudding).

Pour the batter into a lightly oiled 20cm round springform tin. Bake at 180°C for around 35 - 40 minutes or until a skewer inserted comes out clean.

Cool in the tin for 10 –15 minutes before turning out.

Turn onto serving plate. While still warm, pour ¼ cup maple syrup over the top.

Serve with warm caramel custard.

Serves 4.

### Caramel Custard

⅓ cup sugar  
2 cups (500ml) trim milk  
2 Tbsp custard powder

Add sugar to heavy bottomed saucepan. Heat on medium heat until sugar is melted and caramel in colour. Add milk (sugar will crackle a bit at this stage) and stir over heat until caramel dissolves. Mix custard powder to a smooth paste with some extra milk, stir into hot caramel milk and bring to boil, stirring all the time. Turn heat off and keep stirring for a minute until thickened.

### Health Habits:

- Fruit purees and/or grated fruit means less fat and sugar, and add fibre.
- Replacing some white flour with wholemeal flour to add more fibre.
- Walnuts are a good source of omega 3 fatty acids.
- Use a healthy oil like canola oil instead of butter.
- Serving pudding with a low fat custard rather than a cream or buttery sauce.