

Choconut Pudding with crushed milk chocolate peanut butter maltballs

Okay, so making chocolate pudding with crushed candy on top is probably not the most responsible thing I could do 3 days before Halloween, but I hope my generally healthful diet means I'll get a free pass this once. Don't be fooled by this dish's name: there are no crunchy nuts in this pudding, but there is peanut butter in the maltballs, coconut milk, and almond extract. Feel free to substitute Whoppers, Almond Joy, or Mounds for the candy topping. This is the one week you're likely to have them in the house anyway.

Makes 5 individual servings

1/3 cup sugar

1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

2 tablespoons cornstarch

pinch salt

1-1/4 cups 2% milk

3/4 cup well-shaken coconut milk (I used light)

4 ounces chopped bittersweet chocolate

1/2 teaspoon almond extract

5 Trader Joe's Milk Chocolate Peanut Butter Maltballs, or candy of your choice, finely chopped*

In a medium saucepan, whisk the sugar, cocoa, cornstarch, and salt.

Combine the milk and coconut milk in a 2 cup glass measure. Very, very slowly, drizzle the milks over the cocoa mixture, whisking with a flat-bottom whisk (if you have one) until smooth.

Set over medium heat and stir, whisking gently, for 5 to 6 minutes, or until bubbles break the surface of the pudding for a full minute. (If you don't have a flat-bottomed whisk, use a wooden spoon.) Remove from the heat and stir in the chopped chocolate and almond extract.

Divide among 5 ramekins. If you must eat this warm, at least allow it to cool for a few minutes before topping it with the chopped maltballs. If you can wait, refrigerate the pudding first, then top with chopped candy just before serving.

*If you forgo the candy topping, which would be a mistake, top each pudding with additional chopped bittersweet chocolate instead.