



JEWELLED CHOCOLATE & POMEGRANATE DISCS

Makes: 10-12

Eat within 1 day.

Keeps: 3 days at room temperature if dried fruit, such as goji berries or cherries, is used instead of the pomegranate seeds.

Per serving: 93 cal, 6 g carbs

These indulgent, easy to make chocolate discs, with their irresistible mix of smooth dark chocolate, crunchy nuts and tangy fresh pomegranate seeds, are a healthy alternative to a box of chocolates and a rather beautiful after-dinner treat.

Unsweetened chocolate contains polyphenols, antioxidants that can help prevent heart disease, cancer, and Alzheimer's. Pomegranate seeds, which replace the sugar-laden glacé cherries traditionally used in Florentines, are rich in antioxidants and help control blood pressure. The nuts are a good source of protein, healthy fats and vitamins B and E.

Mixing melted and unmelted chocolate together (a process known as tempering) changes the structure of the chocolate, giving the finished discs a lovely glossy finish.

For a nut-free version, use cacao nibs, dried coconut pieces, or dried fruit such as sultanas, raisins, cherries, or chopped apricots instead of the pecans and pistachios.

100 g (3 ½ oz) good quality dark eating chocolate (70% cocoa if possible)

100 g (3 ½ oz) pecan halves or chopped pistachios, or a mixture

2 tbsp fresh pomegranate seeds

Line a tray with baking paper. Chop the chocolate into small pieces. Put two-thirds in a bowl and microwave on half power in 10-20 second bursts until just melted. Alternatively, melt it in a heat-proof bowl set over a saucepan of barely simmering water for 3-4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until almost melted then remove from the heat.

With either method, add the remaining third of unmelted chocolate to the bowl, mixing vigorously for a minute or two until smooth. If the mixture is still lumpy, warm it slightly, either by a 10-second burst in the microwave or over the hot water in the saucepan.

Working quickly before the chocolate starts to set, drop teaspoonfuls of the melted chocolate onto the paper, spreading each into a 5 cm (2") circle with the back of your spoon. Stud each disc with pomegranate seeds and the nuts or other toppings. Leave to set, but don't refrigerate or the chocolate will lose its shine.

JUDI'S TIP: as a short-cut, use a 100g pack of giant dark chocolate buttons instead of eating chocolate. Soften them slightly in the microwave, then arrange them on a lined baking sheet and add the toppings as before. The chocolate won't stay glossy but will taste fine.

