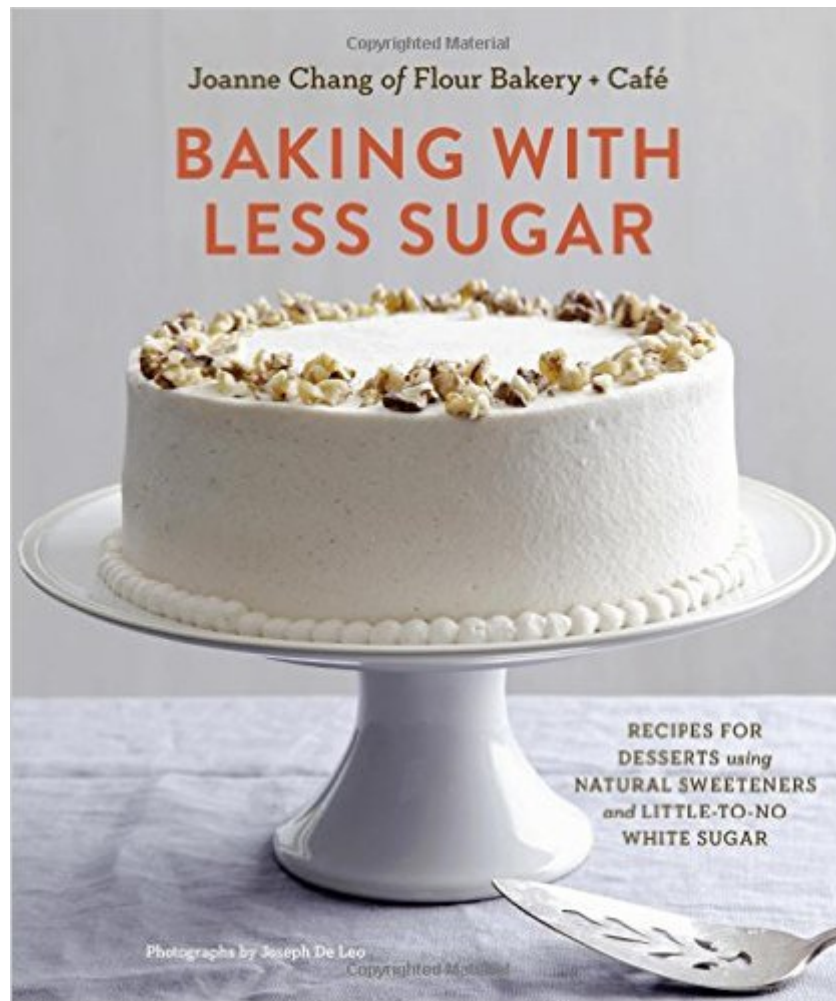


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Baking With Less Sugar: Recipes For Desserts Using Natural Sweeteners And Little-to-No White Sugar



Synopsis

Trust Joanne Changâbeloved author of the bestselling *Flour* and a Harvard math major to bootâto come up with this winning formula: Minus the sugar equals plus the flavor. The 60-plus recipes here are an eye-opener for anyone who loves to bake and wants to cut back on the sugar. Joanne warmly shares her secrets for playing up delicious ingredients and using natural sweeteners, such as honey, maple syrup, and fruit juice. In addition to entirely new go-to recipes, she's also revisited classics from *Flour* and her lines-out-the-door bakeries to use minimal refined sugar. More than 35 mouthwatering photographs beautifully illustrate these revolutionary recipes, making this a must-have book for bakers of all skill levels.

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Customer Reviews

Both as a response to requests of longtime customers and to address her husband's sugar sensitivity- and, it seems, because of the intellectual challenge required- Chang rejiggered some old favorites to use less sugar. In many cases, Chang keeps the basic structure of a recipe but simply reduces the amount of sugar. (If you've ever put more than a cup of sugar into a cake recipe, you'll be relieved to know that you can get away with as little as a third of a cup to achieve the same results in structure and lose very little in taste.) In other cases, Chang uses "natural" alternatives, including honey, maple syrup, dates and fruit juice concentrates; she does mention stevia's properties, but (thankfully) doesn't use it in baking because stevia is only a sweetener and doesn't work as a stabilizer. Finally, she relies on the natural sweetness in some common ingredients, including dairy cream, coconut milk and vanilla. (Is vanilla, even in seed/paste form, sweet? I don't

think so, but because so many of us associate the flavor with sweetness, psychologically that's enough to convey it without extra sugar, at least in whipped cream.)As someone who has been baking for a family for decades, I've known for quite some time that much of the sugar could be reduced without a problem- in cakes. I was particularly impressed by what Chang could do with frosting. The "cover model" is a carrot cake with cream cheese frosting; as anyone who has ever made a cream cheese frosting knows, it becomes softer more quickly and sometimes requires more sugar than buttercream frostings to help hold its shape. Chang uses a combination of vigorous beating and heavy cream to achieve an impressively similar result. Highly recommended for home bakers who want to use less sugar.

1) There is still a lot of sugar in these desserts - at least 15-20 grams worth per serving in many. Chang says this book is not for diabetics or low-carb aficionados, but instead for people trying to make "Wow!" desserts, just with less sugar. Ok, Ms. Chang, I'll stay with you for now. 2) The desserts don't last as long as you're used to (because sugar acts as a moistening agent and as a preservative). You experienced bakers out there probably knew this, but I didn't. So not only are you getting a lot of sugar per serving, the cake won't last 3 days for you and your family to enjoy over time; all that work is down the drain within 24 hours (unless you eat it all immediately, thereby lessening the point of baking with less sugar in the first place). Chang also mentions this issue several times in the book. (Too bad I couldn't read the book before buying it!) 3) When I tried baking these recipes, a few I just could NOT get right. The cakes in particular - I don't know what went wrong. I ended up with soggy messes. I have never messed up a recipe more than once, and with one of these recipes (the apple-maple cake), I tried 3(!) times. Failed every time and ended up with butter seeping out of the cake. What? The short version of the story is: buy this book only if you 1. have a large family who can eat an entire cake in one day, but 2. you don't want to over-stuff them with sugar, and 3. make sure you try out the recipe before you serve it to anyone because... the desserts can turn out really weird. Hmmm.

I have enjoyed the recipes in the book we have tried so far. I agree with some of the other reviews which question categorizing this book as featuring truly healthy recipes, but it's a terrific alternative to desserts that are drowning in sugar. We just had the blueberry nectarine pie and loved it. There is still a stick of butter in the crust which is made with white processed flour, but the sugar is limited to four tablespoons, considerably less than most pie recipes which can often range from 1/2 cup to one cup of sugar. The frozen Greek yogurt has become a staple in our house, as it can be prepped

in just five minutes before going into the ice cream maker. If the fruit is sweet enough, I often don't even need to add any sweetener at all. I did find the tropical tapioca to be too sweet for my taste, but modified it by eliminating the apple juice concentrate and adding in just a small amount of organic honey. I think many of us have grown up with our food chock full of sugar, and it's nice to find out that food can be just as tasty or even better by cutting down the sugar. These will continue to be just once in a while treats in our house, but I do like baking with less sugar or by using natural sweeteners.

I appreciate what Joanne Chang is doing with this book. She states that she is baking with LESS sugar, not "no sugar", not for diabetics, she does not claim that it's "healthy". She also explains the process of developing these recipes and how decreasing sugar doesn't just affect the taste - it affects texture and shelf life too. She's completely up front of all of these things, so I think it's unfair that people are giving negative criticisms for what the author has already told you. Even though I am used to eating things with less sugar, the first two recipes I tried came out bland and downright salty - the bacon scones and pecan coffee cake. The banana bread is stellar though. I'm still working my way through the book but I think it's a good introduction to thinking about baked treats differently.

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