

Chocolate Banana Pops

Serves 6

3 bananas (ripe, without soft spots)

1 cup to 1 1/4 cups dairy-free chocolate chips (start melting 1 cup worth, then melt the other 1/4 cup if needed)

1 Tablespoon shortening

6 popsicle sticks

optional: chopped nuts or dairy-free sprinkles

Line a baking pan with waxed paper or plastic wrap. Peel the bananas and cut in half crosswise. Put a popsicle stick into the cut end of each banana half. Lay bananas on the waxed paper or plastic wrap. Put bananas into the freezer for 1 to 2 hours until very firm and frozen. If using, pour nuts or sprinkles on a small plate and set aside.

In a double boiler, melt chocolate chips with shortening. When chocolate is melted, pour into a glass. Remove bananas from freezer. Working quickly, dip each banana by holding the popsicle stick and twirling in the chocolate. The chocolate should harden on the frozen banana very quickly. Roll in chopped nuts or sprinkles before chocolate hardens, if desired. Place coated banana back on baking pan. When all the bananas are coated in chocolate, place pan back into the freezer until chocolate is set. Wrap each banana half in plastic, then put wrapped banana pops in a container with a lid. Store in the freezer until ready to serve for up to 2 weeks.

To melt chocolate in a microwave: Pour chocolate chips and shortening into a microwave safe bowl. Place bowl in the center of microwave. Set the microwave to cook at half-power or 50 percent power level. Cook at half power for 30 seconds. Stir chocolate. Repeat heating and stirring chocolate (on 50% power for 30 seconds or less at a time) until chocolate is just melted. Do not cook chocolate longer than just until it melts or it will scorch.

Chocolate Smoothie

1 banana, cut into chunks and frozen
2 teaspoons cocoa powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup non-dairy milk substitute of choice (almond, coconut, soy, hemp, rice, etc.)
sweetener of choice, to taste - optional

Place all ingredients in a blender. Cover and blend ingredients until smooth. You can adjust the consistency by adding more ice if it's too thin or more liquid if it's too thick. Pour in glasses.

Note: You can add ½ cup non-dairy vanilla yogurt or non-dairy kefir to the ingredients in the blender before mixing.

Vanilla Smoothie

1 banana, cut into chunks and frozen
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup non-dairy milk substitute of choice (almond, coconut, soy, hemp, rice, etc.)
sweetener of choice, to taste - optional

Place all ingredients in a blender. Cover and blend ingredients until smooth. You can adjust the consistency by adding more ice if it's too thin or more liquid if it's too thick. Pour in glasses.

Note: You can add ½ cup non-dairy vanilla yogurt or non-dairy vanilla kefir to the ingredients in the blender before mixing.

Dairy-Free Ranch-style Dressing and Dip

Makes about 1 cup.

3/4 cup dairy-free mayonnaise

1/3 cup minced celery with leaves

2 Tablespoons chopped fresh parsley (or 2 t. dried parsley)

1 Tablespoon finely minced onion

1 teaspoon lemon juice or cider vinegar

1 clove minced or pressed garlic

1/4 teaspoon dried thyme

1/4 teaspoon celery seed

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Unsweetened dairy-free milk substitute—the amount will depend on if you are making dip or dressing.

In a bowl combine all ingredients except the milk substitute. Add milk substitute one tablespoon at a time to make the dressing as thick as you like. You can make thinner or thicker by varying the amount of milk substitute added.

Transfer to an airtight container. Put in the refrigerator to chill and let the flavors combine.

Store in the refrigerator until ready to serve.