

Matcha green tea gives a flavorful boost to banana ice cream - Banana Matcha Green Tea "Ice Cream" -

By: Melissa d'Arabian July 13, 2015

Like many Americans, I was first exposed to the taste of matcha green tea without really any thought on my part: green tea ice cream was the only dessert offered at our local Japanese restaurant, and since it was included in the price of the meal (even the early bird special, which is when we would go), I ate it. And I grew to love matcha's mildly grassy, slightly bitter tea flavor.



I had no idea what "matcha" was, so if you don't either, you are not alone. Matcha is the powder made from dried green tea leaves, and it is an integral part of Japanese health and culinary culture.

All the amazing health benefits of green tea — the antioxidants are just the start — are multiplied with matcha, because rather than simply steeping the leaves in water, then discarding them, you actually are eating the leaves themselves in powdered form.

If you've never bought matcha before, I'll warn you: it's not cheap! And quality varies widely. Matcha aficionados will often buy high-end matchas (sometimes call "ceremonial grade") for mixing into hot water and drinking straight. However, if you are using matcha for recipes such as this, then the more affordable "culinary" grade is a fine option. And since the powder is intense, a little bit lasts a long time.

My priority is sourcing from a supplier I trust. I find that buying a lower quality tea grade from a highly respected supplier gives me the best value for my dollar.

You can use matcha in lattes, smoothies, baked goods such as muffins or pancakes, desserts, chia breakfast puddings, and of course, ice cream. My version of matcha green tea "ice cream" is an easy healthy-enough-for-breakfast take on the Japanese restaurant classic. It requires just four ingredients and zero special equipment. And yet it is dreamy, creamy and just the right amount of sweet.

Banana Matcha Green Tea 'Ice Cream'

Start to Finish: 10 minutes, plus freezing; servings: 4

3 large ripe bananas
2 tablespoons coconut milk
2 teaspoons matcha green tea powder

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Peel, slice and freeze the bananas in an airtight container or bag for at least 4 hours or overnight. Once the bananas are frozen, place them in a food processor. Process until the bananas have the texture of lumpy oatmeal (about 1 minute). Add the coconut milk, green tea powder and vanilla, then process until very smooth and creamy, about another 2 minutes, scraping down the sides of the processor as needed.

Once the ice cream is completely smooth, scrape into an airtight container, cover and freeze for 1 to 2 hours for a soft-serve consistency. For a firmer, more scoop-friendly ice cream, freeze for over 4 hours and allow to temper at room temperature for 10 minutes before scooping.

Nutrition information per serving: 100 calories; 15 calories from fat (15 percent of total calories); 2 g fat (1.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 0 mg sodium; 21 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 11 g sugar; 1 g protein.

Food Network star Melissa d'Arabian is an expert on healthy eating on a budget. She is the author of the cookbook, "Supermarket Healthy".