

LEONOR'S SWEET CREATIONS.



# The Functional Dessert Collection

Volume 1

— Molten Chocolate Lava Cake —

— Fudgy Functional Brownies —

— Functional Crème Brûlée —

— Spiced Carrot Cake with Chocolate Ganache —



*Gluten-free · Dairy-free · Refined sugar-free · Low glycaemic load*

by **Leonor Capristano**



# Desserts That Love You Back

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For ten years I was a professional baker and cake designer in Germany. Wedding cakes, elaborate celebration desserts, hundreds of students — I built a real career around the joy of making things beautiful and delicious.

Then one diagnosis changed everything. Gluten, dairy, and refined sugar — gone, all at once. As a baker, it felt like losing a decade of my life's work.

But I did what any stubborn baker does. I started over. Not to settle for "healthy versions" — but to crack the actual code on how to make desserts that are genuinely delicious and made with ingredients that nourish you instead of depleting you.

*“You don’t have to give up what you love. You just need a smarter way to make it.”*

What I found changed how I think about food entirely. I call it **functional baking** — and this little book is your first taste of it.

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## What you’ll find inside

- **Molten Chocolate Lava Cake** — the recipe that started everything for me
- **Fudgy Functional Brownies** — with the crackly top everyone asks about
- **Functional Crème Brûlée** — same shatter, fraction of the sugar
- **Spiced Carrot Cake** — with dark chocolate ganache, gluten-free and dairy-free

## What makes these functional?

Every recipe in this book is **gluten-free, dairy-free, and refined sugar-free**. But that’s not what makes them functional. What makes them functional is the *why* behind every ingredient. Each one was chosen not just for taste but for what it does for your body — the good fats, the fibre, the phytonutrients, the lower glycaemic load. You’ll see this in the ingredient notes throughout the book.

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The result? Desserts with a lower glycaemic load, more protein, more fibre, and more beneficial fats than their traditional equivalents. And — this is the part that matters most — desserts that taste so good nobody at the table will ever guess they're healthy.

#### **A quick note on glycaemic load (GL)**

GL measures how much a food raises blood sugar — not just how much sugar it contains.

Low GL (under 10 per serving) = gentle, steady energy. No spike. No crash.

Every recipe in this book targets a GL of under 12. Most come in at under 10.

The combination of good fat, protein, and fibre in each recipe is what makes this possible.

*I hope these four recipes open a door for you — the same door they opened for me. Enjoy every bite.*

With love from my kitchen, **Leonor**

# Molten Chocolate Lava Cake

*The recipe that started everything*

Dairy-free · Gluten-free · Refined sugar-free · Makes 5 cakes

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When I discovered my intolerances, I didn't know functional baking existed. I found this recipe, tried it, and it worked. That moment opened a door. From there I started experimenting, researching, and developing my own versions — and that's what this entire course is built on. This is where it all began.

The secret is understanding what's actually happening: the centre is not underbaked batter. It's a partially set custard. The exterior reaches the temperature for the eggs to coagulate; the centre does not. Once you understand this, you can control it every time.

## Ingredients

### The cakes

- 120 g dark chocolate, 60–70% cocoa, finely chopped
- 60 g refined coconut oil (neutral flavour)
- 2 large egg yolks + 2 large whole eggs, room temperature
- 60 g coconut sugar, blitzed to a fine powder
- 40 g gluten-free flour mix (or almond flour for a richer result)
- ¼ tsp espresso powder — amplifies chocolate without tasting of coffee
- ¼ tsp fine sea salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

### For the moulds

- Refined coconut oil for greasing
- 2 tbsp raw cacao powder for dusting + extra for finishing

## Method

### Step 1 — Prep the moulds

Brush 5 individual pudding or cupcake moulds (8 cm / approximately 3¼ inches) generously with coconut oil. Add 1 tsp raw cacao powder to each, tilt to coat completely, tap out excess.

### Step 2 — Blitz the sugar

Blitz coconut sugar in a spice grinder for 30 seconds until it resembles icing sugar. This step is not optional — fine powder is what gives the batter its smooth, emulsified texture.

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### Step 3 — Melt the chocolate base

Melt chocolate and coconut oil together over a bain-marie or in 20-second microwave bursts. Warm, not hot — blood temperature on your finger. Add espresso powder, salt, vanilla. Set aside.

### Step 4 — Whip eggs and sugar

Whisk egg yolks, whole eggs, and blitzed coconut sugar on medium-high for 3–4 minutes until pale, slightly thickened, and leaving a ribbon trail.

### Step 5 — Combine

Fold the warm chocolate base into the whipped eggs gently. Sift in the flour and fold until just combined — no streaks.

### Step 6 — Fill the moulds

Divide batter evenly between the prepared moulds. Bake immediately, or see the tip below about the optional chill-ahead method.

### Step 7 — Bake

Preheat oven to 180–200°C (350–400°F) — no higher for this recipe. Bake for 5–8 minutes depending on your oven. The top should look just set and matte. The centre should feel barely firm when gently pressed at the edge.

### Step 8 — Serve immediately

Rest 1 minute. Run a knife around the edge and invert onto a plate. Dust with raw cacao powder. Serve within 2 minutes.

#### Optional: the chill-ahead method (how restaurants do it)

Fill the moulds, cover, and refrigerate for up to 24 hours before baking.

Bake straight from the fridge — add 1–2 minutes to the bake time.

A cold batter widens your timing window, making it easier to nail the molten centre.

This turns a technically demanding recipe into a perfect prepare-ahead dinner party dessert.

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## Nutrition per serving

- Calories: ~290 kcal
- Net carbs: ~22 g
- Added sugar: ~12 g (vs ~28–35 g in a traditional lava cake)
- Beneficial fats: ~18 g
- Protein: ~5 g
- Estimated glycaemic load: ~9–10

# Fudgy Functional Brownies

*With the crackly shiny top*

Dairy-free · Gluten-free · Refined sugar-free · Makes 9 generous squares

Every functional baker eventually runs into the brownie problem. You can make the inside fudgy, you can make it chocolatey, you can make it rich and indulgent — but the top stays matte, flat, sometimes wet. For years it felt like the shiny crackle was a refined-sugar privilege. It isn't. It's a technique.

That papery, shiny crust forms because sugar dissolves into beaten eggs and rises to the surface during baking. As the water evaporates, it leaves a thin sugar-protein film — a micro-meringue. When it cools, it crackles. The secret: blitz your coconut sugar to a fine powder before using it. This single step makes it dissolve into the eggs the way caster sugar would.

## Ingredients

### The fat + chocolate base

- 140 g dark chocolate, 60–70% cocoa, chopped
- 60 g refined coconut oil
- 30 g tahini, well-stirred (adds depth and good fat — you won't taste tahini)

### The egg whip — this is the crackle engine

- 2 large eggs + 1 large yolk, room temperature
- 60 g coconut sugar, blitzed fine
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

### Dry + flavour

- 50 g almond flour, fine blanched
- 20 g raw cacao powder, sifted
- 15 g tapioca starch
- 2 tbsp (14 g) ground flaxseed
- ½ tsp fine sea salt
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon

### The pleasure layer

- 2 medjool dates (or 4 regular dates, soaked 20 min), finely chopped
- 15 g raw cacao nibs
- 60 g dark chocolate 70%, chopped into chunks
- Flaky sea salt for finishing

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## Method

### Step 1 — Prep

Oven to 175°C / 350°F conventional. Line a 20 cm (8 inch) square pan with parchment. Blitz coconut sugar 30 seconds to fine powder. Chop dates to 5mm pieces.

### Step 2 — Melt the base

Melt chocolate + coconut oil + tahini over simmering water or in 20-second microwave bursts. Warm, not hot — blood temperature. Rest while you whip the eggs.

### Step 3 — Whip — this is the crackle step

Combine eggs, extra yolk, blitzed coconut sugar, vanilla, salt, cinnamon in a large bowl. Whisk on medium-high for a full 4 minutes. Pale, thick, ribbon trail. Do not cheat the time.

### Step 4 — Combine

Fold warm chocolate base into the whipped eggs. Sift in almond flour, cacao, tapioca. Add flaxseed. Fold until no streaks. Fold in dates, cacao nibs, most chocolate chunks.

### Step 5 — Pan + bake

Pour into pan. Scatter reserved chocolate chunks on top. Do not tap the pan. Bake 22–28 minutes. Looking for: shiny crackled top, edges pulled from pan, skewer 2 cm (3/4 inch) from edge with moist crumbs, slight jiggle at centre.

### Step 6 — Cool

10 min in pan, then lift out. 45 min on rack before cutting. Sprinkle flaky salt while slightly warm. For cleanest cuts: chill 30 min, use a hot dry knife.

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## Nutrition per square (1 of 9)

- Calories: ~320 kcal
- Net carbs: ~21 g
- Added sugar: ~15 g (vs ~22–25 g in a traditional brownie)
- Beneficial fats: ~23 g
- Protein: ~6 g
- Fibre: ~3 g
- Estimated glycaemic load: ~9–10

### Why the crackle matters beyond aesthetics

The crackle is not just visual. It's the sign that the sugar dissolved properly into the eggs, creating an emulsified batter that bakes evenly and gives you that fudgy-not-cakey interior. No crackle usually means the sugar wasn't blitzed fine enough — try again next time.

# Functional Crème Brûlée

*Same crack. Same amber. Same drama.*

Dairy-free · Gluten-free · Refined sugar-free · Serves 6

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The crème brûlée is one of those desserts that lives entirely in the experience. The thin caramel lid. The sound when the spoon breaks through. The cold custard underneath. This version delivers all of that — the same crack, the same wobble, the same amber top. But the custard beneath is made with cashew cream and egg yolks, not double cream, and the sugar is demerara throughout.

Traditional crème brûlée has approximately 25–30 g of sugar per ramekin and around 350–380 calories. This version has approximately 9–10 g of sugar and 150 calories. Same crack. Same drama. Very different story.

## Ingredients

### The custard

- 300 ml unsweetened almond or cashew milk, room temperature
- 200 ml full-fat coconut milk, well shaken
- 30 g smooth cashew butter (2 tbsp), runny consistency
- 5 large egg yolks, room temperature
- 38 g demerara sugar, blitzed to a fine powder
- 1½ tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp pure almond extract
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 strip lemon peel (yellow part only, about 5 cm / 2 inches)
- Pinch of fine sea salt

### The brûlée topping

- Approximately 3–4 tsp demerara sugar total (½–¾ tsp per ramekin)

## Method

### Step 1 — Prep

Preheat oven to 150°C / 300°F conventional (not fan). Place 6 ramekins in a deep roasting tin. Blitz demerara 30 seconds to fine powder. Boil a full kettle.

### Step 2 — Infuse the milk base

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Combine nut milk, coconut milk, cashew butter, and lemon peel in a saucepan. Warm over medium-low until just steaming — not boiling. Remove from heat. Add vanilla, almond extract, cinnamon. Infuse 5 minutes. Remove lemon peel.

### Step 3 — Whisk yolks and sugar

Whisk egg yolks, powdered demerara, and salt for about 1 minute until pale and slightly thickened. Do not over-whisk — you don't want foam, which creates a pitted surface.

### Step 4 — Temper — the step that prevents scrambled eggs

Pour the warm milk into the yolks very slowly — start with just a thin stream, whisking constantly. Once you've added a third of the liquid and the yolks feel warm, you can add the rest steadily. Never stop whisking.

### Step 5 — Strain

Pour through a fine sieve into a jug. Skim any foam from the surface. What goes into the ramekins should be completely smooth.

### Step 6 — Bake in a water bath

Fill ramekins to about 5 mm (¼ inch) below the rim. Pour boiled water (slightly cooled) into the roasting tin to reach halfway up the ramekins. Bake 45–55 minutes. Done when the centre wobbles like just-set jelly but the edges are firm.

### Step 7 — Cool and chill

Remove from water bath. Cool to room temperature (1 hour). Refrigerate uncovered minimum 4 hours, ideally overnight.

### Step 8 — Brûlée

Sprinkle ½–¾ tsp demerara evenly over each custard. Blowtorch in slow circles 3–4 cm (1–1½ inches) from the surface until deep amber. Wait 2 minutes. Tap with the back of a spoon. Listen for the crack.

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## Nutrition per ramekin (1 of 6)

- Calories: ~150 kcal (vs ~350–380 in a traditional crème brûlée)
- Net carbs: ~12 g
- Added sugar: ~9–10 g (vs ~25–30 g traditionally)
- Beneficial fats: ~10 g
- Protein: ~3 g
- Estimated glycaemic load: ~8–9

# Spiced Carrot Cake

*With dark chocolate ganache*

Dairy-free · Gluten-free · Refined sugar-free · Serves 10–12

Carrot cake is one of those recipes that practically everyone loves and almost nobody questions. The carrot provides natural moisture and beta-carotene. The oil gives tenderness. The eggs give structure. Once you understand what each ingredient is doing, you start to see where the smarter choices are — and this recipe makes every one of them.

The signature of this version is the spice combination: cinnamon, ginger, and cardamom together give a warmth and depth that the classic carrot cake rarely reaches. The carrot is liquidised for a perfectly smooth, moist batter. And the dark chocolate ganache, flowing down the ridges of the bundt shape, turns a simple cake into something you would be proud to bring to any table.

## Ingredients

### The cake

- 200 g carrot, peeled and finely grated
- 70 g oat flour, certified gluten-free
- 80 g almond flour, fine blanched
- 1 tbsp (15 g) tapioca starch
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 60 g refined coconut oil, melted and slightly cooled
- 80 g light muscovado or light brown sugar
- 10 g baking powder, gluten-free certified
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp ground cardamom
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp fine sea salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp finely grated orange zest (optional but recommended)

### The dark chocolate ganache

- 120 g dark chocolate, 65–70% cocoa, finely chopped
- 60 ml full-fat coconut milk, well shaken
- 1 tbsp refined coconut oil
- Pinch of fine sea salt

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## For the tin

- Refined coconut oil for greasing
- 1 tbsp oat or almond flour for dusting

## Method

### Step 1 — Prep

Preheat oven to 180°C / 350°F conventional. Grease a 20 cm (8 inch) bundt tin generously with coconut oil, working it into all the ridges. Dust with flour, tap to coat, tap out excess. Peel and finely grate the carrot.

### Step 2 — Mix the wet ingredients

Whisk eggs, melted coconut oil, light muscovado (or light brown sugar), vanilla, and orange zest for 2 minutes until smooth and the sugar is dissolved.

### Step 3 — Add the dry ingredients

Sift oat flour, almond flour, tapioca starch, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, and salt over the wet ingredients. Fold through gently until no dry streaks remain. Do not overwork.

### Step 4 — Add the carrot

Liquidise the carrot with a splash of the measured coconut oil until completely smooth, then add to the batter and fold until evenly combined.

### Step 5 — Bake

Pour into the prepared tin. Tap once on the counter to settle. Bake 40–45 minutes. Done when a skewer comes out with moist crumbs, the top springs back lightly, and edges have begun to pull away from the tin. Do not open the oven in the first 30 minutes.

### Step 6 — Cool and unmould

Leave in tin on a rack for 20 minutes. Run a thin knife around the edges and central tube. Invert in one confident movement. Cool completely before glazing — at least 1 hour.

### Step 7 — Make the ganache

Place chopped chocolate in a heatproof bowl. Heat coconut milk until just steaming. Pour over chocolate, leave 2 minutes. Add coconut oil and salt. Stir from centre outward until smooth and glossy. Cool 5–10 minutes until slightly thickened but pourable.

### Step 8 — Glaze

Pour ganache slowly over the top of the ring, letting it drip down the sides. Set 15 minutes at room temperature before slicing.

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## Nutrition per slice (1 of 12, cake only)

- Calories: ~210 kcal
- Net carbs: ~16 g

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- Added sugar: ~7 g
  - Beneficial fats: ~14 g
  - Protein: ~5 g
  - Fibre: ~2 g
  - Estimated glycaemic load: ~8–10

# This Was Just Volume 1

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These four recipes are a window into what functional baking looks and tastes like. But they're just the beginning. In my full programme, you'll learn how to think like a functional baker — so you can transform *any* traditional recipe, not just the ones I give you.

## In the Functional Desserts Programme you'll learn:

- The science behind every ingredient — what it does in the recipe AND what it does in your body
- The full library of functional ingredients — flours, fats, sweeteners, binders, leaveners
- How to adapt any traditional recipe to be gluten-free, dairy-free, and refined sugar-free
- All baking techniques that will turn you into a professional functional baker
- Dozens of tested, delicious recipes across every dessert category
- The glycaemic load framework — so every dessert you make works with your body
- Live support, a community of like-minded bakers, and ongoing new recipes

*“What initially was a shock became a blessing to me. My desserts now taste indistinguishable from the originals — and I can eat them totally guilt-free.”*

— Leonor Capristano

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## Ready to go further?

If these four recipes have shown you what's possible, imagine what you could make with the full framework behind them. The Functional Desserts Programme is where you learn not just the recipes — but the thinking. And once you have the thinking, you don't need anyone's recipes anymore. You can create your own.

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## Join the Functional Desserts Programme

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## FROM MY KITCHEN TO YOURS



These recipes are my gift to you. If they open a door — the same door that opened for me — then my work here is already done.

*With love from my kitchen,*

**Leonor**

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## A taste of what's coming in Volume 2

New York-style Cheesecake · Caramel Pudding · Red Velvet Cupcakes · Chocolate Chip Cookies

*Want to learn to make all of these yourself — and any other dessert you love? That's exactly what the Functional Desserts Programme is for.*