Indulge in Wellness: Your Healthier You, Served as Dessert

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Including: The Functional Baking Cheat Sheet

Your essential ingredient substitution guide



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CHAPTER ONE

Why Desserts Matter

Hi, I'm Leonor Capristano.

I spent a decade as a professional baker before any of this began. Wedding cakes, celebration desserts, teaching other people to bake. Then my body stopped tolerating the ingredients my whole career was built on. Gluten, dairy and refined sugar all had to go.

I could have walked away from desserts altogether. Instead, I spent five years learning nutrition, different baking techniques and testing all sorts of ingredients, until I found a way to keep the desserts I loved and rebuild them with ingredients that actually work with my body, not against it.

That is the whole story behind what I do now.

Imagine a world where desserts are not the enemy of your health but a genuine part of your wellness. Where you eat dessert fully, happily, without the guilt spiral afterwards. Where celebrating with the people you love is not synonymous with bloating, skin rashes or weight gain. That is not a fantasy. That is what functional baking makes possible.

In the following pages, I will explain exactly how functional baking works, what makes it different from diet or sugar-free alternatives, and why it matters for your body.

At the end, you will find something I have never shared before: my complete Functional Baking Cheat Sheet — every substitution I use, the exact ratios, and why each one works. Print it, keep it in your kitchen, and use it every time you bake.

Here is to a sweeter, healthier life — one dessert at a time.

With warm regards,

Leonor

CHAPTER TWO

The Essence of Functional Baking

What Is Functional Baking?

Functional baking is not about removing ingredients and hoping for the best. It is about understanding what each ingredient does in a recipe — structure, moisture, sweetness, binding — and choosing a replacement that does the same job, with better nutritional value.

The result is a dessert that tastes like the original, looks like the original, and satisfies like the original — but is built with ingredients your body can actually use.

The Power of Nutrient-Rich Ingredients

In functional baking, every ingredient earns its place. We use the purest, cleanest form of each one:

real vanilla extract instead of artificial flavoring, whole dates instead of refined sugar, coconut cream instead of dairy cream.

The use of fiber, good fats, proteins and phytochemicals, combined with a low amount of refined carbohydrates, means functional desserts do not cause the blood sugar spike and crash that traditional desserts do. You eat, you feel satisfied, and you move on with your day. No guilt, no crash, no reaching for more.

What We Exclude — and Why

Our recipes are free from allergenic and difficult-to-digest proteins such as gluten and milk protein.

We avoid ultra-processed and highly inflammatory ingredients like margarine, refined vegetable oils, and hydrogenated fats.

Refined sugars, artificial colorings, preservatives, chemical additives and flavor enhancers are out — not as a preference, but because they genuinely harm your body. They drive inflammation, disrupt blood sugar, and add nothing of value to what you are eating.

Condensed milk, ultra-processed fats and hydrogenated oils are out for the same reason. Better alternatives exist for every single one, and once you taste and feel the difference, you will never go back.

Why It Is Not the Same as Sugar-Free or Diet

Diet products focus on removing one thing — usually sugar. They replace it with sugar alcohols or artificial sweeteners and call it healthy. But the refined flour is still there, the artificial additives are still there, and the nutritional value is still close to zero.

Functional baking is different. It does not remove and replace. It rebuilds the entire recipe around ingredients that nourish: fiber, protein, healthy fats, vitamins and minerals working together.

A functional dessert might contain more calories than a diet version. But those calories come from almonds, coconut, dates and eggs — not from refined flour, hydrogenated fat and chemical sweeteners. That difference matters more than any number on a label.

CHAPTER TWO

The Essence of Functional Baking (cont.)

Effects on Your Body and Mind

Functional desserts are crafted using ingredients that serve as rich sources of essential nutrients, vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, protein, healthy fats and phytochemicals.

They promote satiety — you feel genuinely full and satisfied after eating them, rather than wanting more. They nourish your gut microbiome with prebiotic fibers. They combat chronic inflammation instead of contributing to it.

These nutrients positively impact not just your physical health but your mental well-being too. The ability to enjoy a dessert without guilt, free from worries about compromising your health, contributes to a healthier relationship with food.

That is why functional desserts are good for both the body and the mind.

The Inflammation Connection

Chronic inflammation is at the root of many modern health problems, from autoimmune diseases to weight gain. An inflammatory diet — full of refined sugars, processed carbohydrates and additives — makes this worse.

Functional desserts are designed to minimize inflammation. They use anti-inflammatory ingredients: coconut oil instead of refined vegetable oils, almond flour instead of refined wheat, coconut sugar instead of white sugar. Each swap reduces the inflammatory load on your body.

Over time, this is not a small difference. It is the difference between a diet that fights your body and one that supports it.



CHAPTER THREE

An Inclusive Way of Baking

All our desserts are designed to be inclusive and guilt-free. They are free of gluten, dairy, refined sugar, lactose, preservatives, chemical additives, ultra-processed fats, artificial colors, flavor enhancers and artificial flavorings.

They are a safe indulgence for everyone, whether you have dietary restrictions, food intolerances or allergies — celiac disease, lactose intolerance, type 2 diabetes. Even people with type 1 diabetes can easily swap our sugar options for approved sweeteners in almost all recipes.

But here is the important part: even those without any dietary limitations will love these desserts. They are not compromise food. They are genuinely delicious food, made with better ingredients.

One Cake for Everyone

This inclusivity eliminates the need for families to prepare separate desserts for different dietary needs. No more one cake for the family member with celiac disease, another for the lactose-intolerant guest, another for the relative with diabetes.

One recipe. One bake. Everyone eats the same thing.

That kind of separation can lead to stigmatization and emotional distress, particularly in children. And for the person doing the baking — usually mom — it means double the time, double the cost and double the work, every single time.

Functional baking resolves all of it. One cake. Everyone enjoys it. Nobody feels different. And you only do the dishes once.

That is what inclusive baking looks like.

In the following pages, you will find a preview of my Functional Baking Cheat Sheet — the three most important substitutions in each category, with the exact ratios and why each one works.



Flours — What Gives Structure

The 3 most versatile wheat flour replacements

Traditional	Functional Swap	Ratio	Why It Works
Wheat flour	Almond flour	1:1 by weight + 2 tbsp tapioca	Richness and moisture. No gluten, so add tapioca for elasticity. Store in fridge.
Wheat flour	Oat flour (blend rolled oats)	1:1	Most versatile and affordable. Neutral flavor. Use certified GF if needed.
Wheat flour	Coconut flour	1/4 of the amount + 3x liquid	Very absorbent. Light, airy texture. Never use alone — combine with almond or oat.

Want the complete substitution guide?

All flour swaps with ratios and tips inside Dessert Is Not the Enemy.

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Sweeteners, Fats & Dairy

The 3 swaps that change everything

Traditional	Functional Swap	Ratio	Why It Works
White sugar	Coconut sugar	1:1	Lower glycemic index (GI 35 vs 65). Caramel depth. Dissolve in warm liquid first.
Butter	Coconut oil (refined)	1:1 + 1-2 tbsp liquid	Solid when cold like butter. No coconut flavor if refined. No dairy.
Heavy cream	Coconut cream full-fat	1:1 (refrigerate 24h)	Same richness. Whips like dairy cream. Use only the solid part from the can.

Want the complete substitution guide?

All 25 swaps, from dates and maple syrup to sugar-free options and plant milks, inside Dessert Is Not the Enemy.

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Eggs & Setting Agents

The 3 replacements you will use most.

Function Needed	Substitute	Ratio (per egg)	Best For
Binding	Flax egg	1 tbsp ground flax + 3 tbsp water, rest 5 min	Cakes, muffins, pancakes. Neutral flavor. Golden flax is milder.
Moisture	Mashed banana	1/2 ripe banana	Muffins, pancakes. Adds sweetness. Banana flavor comes through.
Setting	Agar-agar	1 tsp per 250ml, boil 2 full min	Panna cotta, puddings, mousses. Must boil — simmer is not enough.

Want the complete substitution guide?

All 11 substitutes, including aquafaba, chia and psyllium, inside Dessert Is Not the Enemy.

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CONCLUSION

Your Next Step

Now you have a first idea of what functional baking is about — not just what to swap, but why each ingredient matters and what it actually does in a recipe.

The cheat sheet in this guide covers the essentials — print it, save it on your phone, stick it on the fridge. It will help you every time you bake.

But this is just the beginning. The next step is putting it into practice with real recipes — tested, adjusted and explained ingredient by ingredient.

That is exactly what my recipe e-book does.

Dessert Is Not the Enemy

Seven complete recipes — a lava cake, muffins, panna cotta, energy balls, cookies, ice cream and a mousse — each with a full breakdown of why every ingredient is there, what it does, and what happens if you change it.

It is the bridge between understanding the theory and actually baking with confidence.



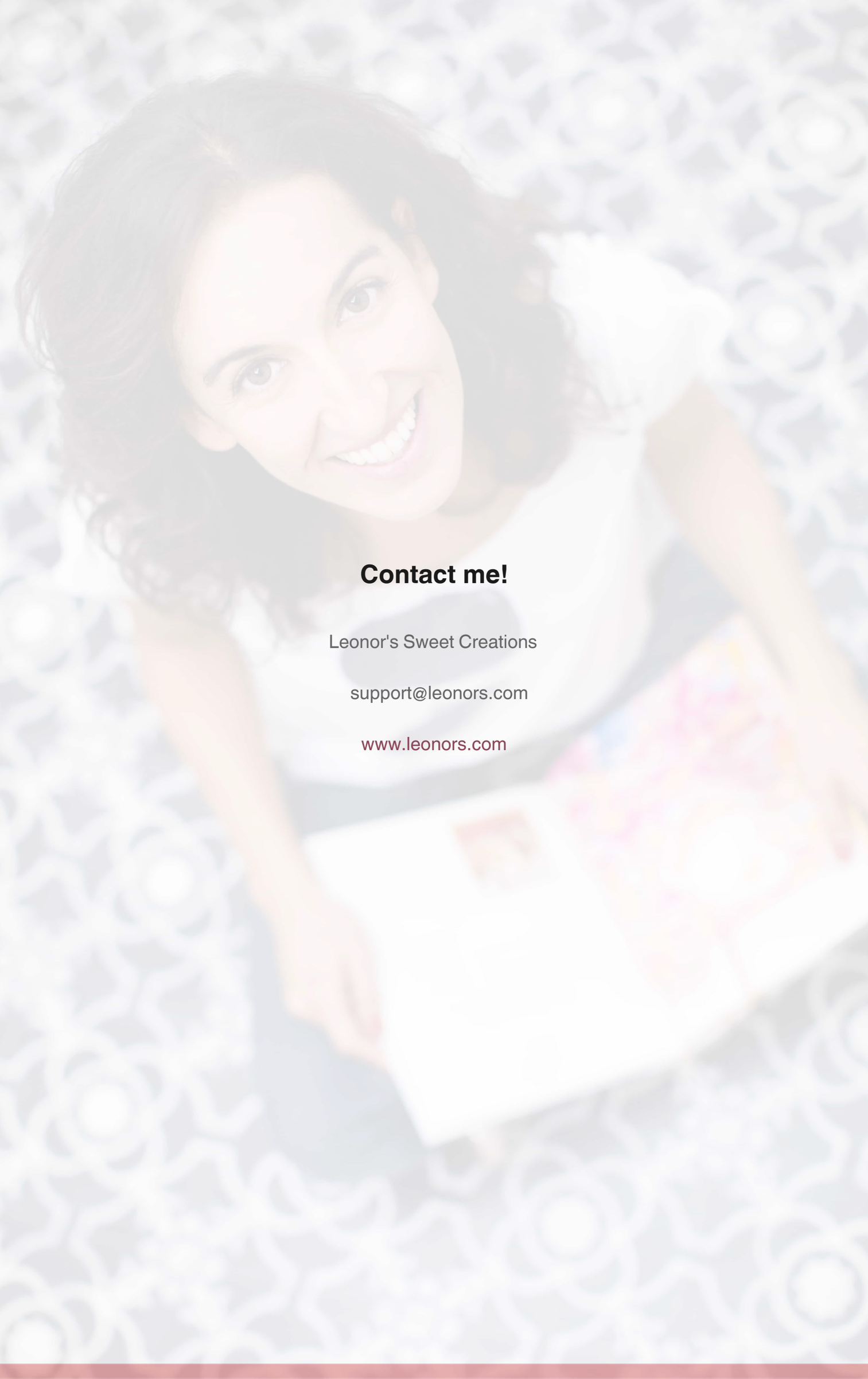
Available now at **leonors.com.**

And if you want to go even deeper — learn every technique, master the ratios, and be able to rebuild any dessert as a functional one — I teach exactly that in my **Functional Desserts Program.**

Follow me on Instagram @leonorssweetcreations for more recipes, tips and the full story.

Have a sweet day!

Leonor



Contact me!

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