

# Vegan Caramel Turtles or Easter Eggs



Makes about 30-40 turtles or 20 easter eggs

*If you loved turtles in your former, non-vegan life, these will be quite a treat. The caramel can be used as a layer in raw brownies, for truffles, and many other treats. If you are able, invest in some silicon cookie sheet mats. These are mats that perfectly on a cookie sheet. They can be used for baking cookies (no spray or oil required) or for makign all sort of raw treats. Double or triple recipe, if desired.*

Pecans (80 or 120 halves) for turtles; 40 hazelnuts for eggs

2 organic, fair trade chocolate bars (2 x 85 g/3 oz)

## **Caramel Filling**

1 cup (250 ml) pine nuts

1 cup (250 ml) pitted, tightly packed medjool dates or other dates

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp vanilla

1. Place dates, pine nuts and vanilla in a food processor and process until very smooth. It should look like caramel. If using hard dates, steam the dates to soften or cover with boiling water for about 5-10 minutes. Drain well before processing. Refrigerate for several hours or freeze for a couple of hours to decrease its stickiness. You can freeze for longer periods of time but will need to let the caramel soften slightly before using.
2. Line 2 cookie sheets silicon cookie mats or parchment paper. For turtles, place nuts on the cookie sheets, with 4 pecan halves for each turtle if you want them larger or 2 if you want them smaller. Arrange them as shown below.
3. Make a ball with about 2-3  teaspoons of the 'caramel' and press caramel top of each of nuts to flatten caramel. (Use about 2 tsp for the smaller turtles and 3 for the larger ones). For eggs, take a heaping tablespoon of caramel, press in the hazelnuts and mold into an egg.
4. Freeze the naked turtles or eggs until solid (2-3 hours or overnight).
5. Put the chocolate bars into the top of a double boiler or in a small pot over low heat and heat until the chocolate is entirely melted. Stir to make it smooth. If the chocolate thickens while melting a small amount of coconut oil will improve the consistency.
6. Take one pan of turtles out of the freezer.
7. Lift each turtle off the parchment paper or silicon mat and brush chocolate to cover the bottom. Place back on cookie sheet and brush chocolate over the top of the turtle. Do this for each turtle, then return tray to the freezer. Remove second tray and repeat. If making eggs, coating is a little trickier as they are not flat. I usually do the top half, re-freeze, flip and do the other half. If you can find silicon egg molds, this

would be helpful. Use your imagination in decorating the eggs.

8. Let the chocolate set completely before removing the turtles from the trays. Place in an airtight container and store them in the freezer. They taste best right from the freezer!

### **Variations:**

1. For vegan milk chocolate turtles, use rice milk chocolate bars. Drizzle with dark chocolate, if desired.
2. For a beautifully decorated turtle, melt some rice milk chocolate and drizzle over the dark chocolate.
3. Mix chocolate with nut butter.
4. Use peanut butter instead of pine nuts for a less expensive variation.
5. Buy some chocolate molds and use the caramel to make caramel chocolates.
6. Add a pinch of your favorite salt (I use Himalayan sea salt for this).