Glimpse into Foodie Friday – week 29 – coconut, and a choc chip almond cookie square recipe

I have a super simple recipe for you today. Everyone seemed to like the look of it on my instagram account, so here it is!

Choc chip almond cookie squares
1/4 cup melted coconut oil or dairy free butter
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/4 tsp almond extract (optional)
1/3 cup rice syrup
1 cup almond meal
1/3 cup coconut flour
1 tsp cinnamon
pinch of salt
1/2 tsp baking soda
50-100g dark choc chips, chopped chocolate or raw cacao nibs

Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius
Mix wet ingredients together.
Add in dry ingredients and combine well.
Spread mixture evenly into lined, shallow baking trays.

Bake for 12-18 minutes til slightly golden.
Let it cool, and then slice into small bars.

Coconut is a confusing food for those of us avoiding fructose. However, give it a go, and you may be pleasantly rewarded for your trial. I slowly introduced it into my diet and find that I can tolerate a reasonable serve of most coconut products. This is great because it adds a nutritious product to the list of foods that I can eat, and it is a flexible ingredient which can be used in many ways.
Sue Sheppard, the health professional who brought about the FODMAP diet, says the following of fructose and coconut:
“There are two pathways by which we absorb fructose. Firstly, fructose is absorbed freely across the intestine. In people with fructose malabsorption, this pathway is impaired. The second pathway is where fructose is carried across the intestine by glucose (glucose “piggy backs” fructose). This pathway is still active in people with fructose malabsorption, so they can still consume foods with fructose in them, as long as there are equal [or more] amounts of glucose present.” As coconut contains more glucose than fructose (glucose 50%, sucrose 35%, and fructose 15% = up to 32% fructose), it is safe for people with fructose malabsorption.
Introduce it slowly and learn your tolerance amount. I find I can eat a normal serve (the amount you would eat in a slice of cake, or drink in a glass) of desiccated, shredded and flaked coconut, coconut water, coconut oil (which contains no fructose), and coconut flour. I find I need to monitor my amount of coconut milk, cream and butter, especially if the meal has other fructose sources, due to the higher fructose content. It is also often combined with guar gum, which a lot

of FructMals and IBS suffers can be sensitive too, so choose a brand which avoids this. I can not tolerate coconut sugar or nectar. This sugar or syrup, made from the sap from the coconut tree bud, can be nearly 50% fructose, so there is no surprise there! Coconut contains sulphites, salicylates, amines and fructans, which can also cause issues for people with digestive issues, so be wary of these too.
Coconut contains heart-loving healthy fats, protein, and dietary fibre, and provide energy, vitamins and minerals to the consumer. It is anti fungal, anti viral and anti protozoa making them great for the immune system. They have suffered a bad rap in the past due to their fat content, but like anything, if your intake is in moderation, your body will love the benefits.