

Nutty Fruity Granola Bars

These Nutty Fruity Granola Bars are chewy and crunchy all at once. Wrap them individually in wax paper for an on-the-go snack, lunch box extra, or even to take on a hike or camping trip. You can easily switch out the ingredients to make your own version—try dried cherries, blueberries and golden raisins or pecans instead of almonds. The possibilities are endless.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Mix together and set aside:

- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup dried figs, cut into a small dice
- ½ cup dried apricots, cut into a small dice

Measure out and pour onto a parchment lined cookie sheet:

- 2 cups gluten-free rolled oats
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- ½ cup pepitas or sunflower seeds or a combination of the two
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut flakes

Toast in the oven for 10-12 minutes stirring from time to time. Make sure not to over-toast—using the coconut as a guide. It should be just browned not dark brown. Remove the toasted oat mixture.

Reduce the oven to 300 degrees.

Meanwhile combine in a medium saucepan over medium heat and cook until the sugar dissolves:

- ½ cup maple or agave syrup or combination of the two (or alternately honey)
- 3 tablespoons coconut oil
- ¼ cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Mix together:

- Warm toasted oat mixture
- ¼ cup chia seeds (optional)
- ¼ cup flax seeds (optional)
- Dried fruit mix

Add in and stir to combine:

- Warm liquid mixture you made previously

Spoon the mixed granola into a parchment lined baking dish—about 8x11.5 inches. Spread it out, place another piece of parchment on top and press down with your hands to compress the granola evenly into the pan.

Bake for 25 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely in the pan. I mean absolutely, positively, completely cool—a few hours. Cut into bars. These will keep in an airtight container for about a week—if you don't eat them all first.