

# Chewy Granola Bars with Walnuts and Cranberries

COOK'S  
ILLUSTRATED

## ✓ WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

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Most store-bought granola bars are too sweet, contain mostly filler, and are soft, not chewy. They're also prone to falling apart. For bars that were wholesome, satisfyingly chewy, and neat to eat, we combined toasted oats, nuts, and seeds with a mixture of pureed apricots, brown sugar, oil, and water and pressed the mixture firmly into a baking pan before baking it. Small chunks of dried fruit provided pops of bright flavor and extra chew while airy rice cereal provided a crisp texture that lightened the bars. The nuts, seeds, and fruit can be swapped out to make bars that suit a variety of tastes.

## INGREDIENTS

[Print Shopping List](#)

## INSTRUCTIONS

**MAKES 24 BARS**

- 1 ½ cups walnuts
- 2 ½ cups (7 ½ ounces) old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 cup raw sunflower seeds
- 1 cup dried apricots
- 1 cup packed (7 ounces) brown sugar
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1 ½ cups (1 ½ ounces) Rice Krispies cereal
- 1 cup dried cranberries



*13 by 9-Inch Baking  
Pans/Dishes*

**BUY WINNER**



*Rimmed Baking Sheets*

**BUY WINNER**



*Food Processors*

**BUY WINNER**

*We like the sweetness of Mediterranean or Turkish apricots in this recipe. Be sure to use apricots that are soft and moist, or the bars will not hold together well. Avoid using extra-thick rolled oats here. Light and dark brown sugar will work equally well in this recipe.*

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Make foil sling for 13 by 9-inch baking pan by folding 2 long sheets of aluminum foil; first sheet should be 13 inches wide and second sheet should be 9 inches wide. Lay sheets of foil in pan perpendicular to each other, with extra foil hanging over edges of pan. Push foil into corners and up sides of pan, smoothing foil flush to pan. Lightly spray foil with vegetable oil spray.

2. Pulse walnuts in food processor until finely chopped, 8 to 10 pulses. Spread walnuts, oats, and sunflower seeds on rimmed baking sheet and toast until lightly browned and fragrant, 12 to 15 minutes, stirring halfway through toasting. Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees.

3. While oat mixture is toasting, process apricots, sugar, and salt in food processor until apricots are very finely ground, about 15 seconds. With processor running, add oil and water. Continue to process until homogeneous paste forms, about 1 minute longer. Transfer paste to large, wide bowl.

4. Add warm oat mixture to bowl and stir with rubber spatula until well coated. Add cereal and cranberries and stir gently until ingredients are evenly mixed. Transfer mixture to prepared pan and spread into even layer. Place 14-inch sheet of parchment or waxed paper on top of granola and press and smooth very firmly with your hands, especially at edges and corners, until granola is level and compact. Remove parchment and bake granola until fragrant and just beginning to brown around edges, about 25 minutes. Transfer pan to wire rack and let cool for 1 hour. Using foil overhang, lift granola out of pan. Return to wire rack and let cool completely, about 1 hour.

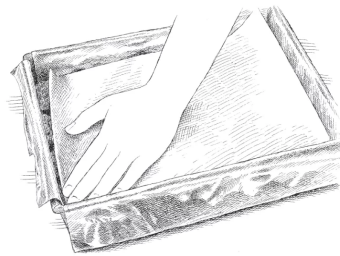
5. Discard foil and transfer granola to cutting board. Using chef's knife, cut granola in half crosswise to create two 6½ by 9-inch rectangles. Cut each rectangle in half to make four 3¼ by 9-inch strips. Cut each strip crosswise into 6 equal pieces. (Granola bars can be stored at room temperature for up to 3 weeks.)

## Staying Power



Stored in an airtight container between sheets of parchment or waxed paper, our granola bars keep for three weeks. As your stock diminishes, transfer the bars to a smaller container to minimize their exposure to air, which can dry them out.

## Technique: Pressing for Success



Using parchment or waxed paper to firmly press the raw granola mixture into the pan leads to a more cohesive mixture that is easier to slice into bars and, in turn, less messy to eat.

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JC JOHN  
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