

# Flapjacks with Fruit and Nuts

## Ingredients

Rolled oats .....	3 cups	Light brown sugar, packed ..	½ cup
Nuts, chopped .....	1 cup	Mexican vanilla .....	1 tsp.
Dried fruit, chopped .....	1 cup	Ground cinnamon .....	1½ tsp.
Unsalted butter .....	¾ cup	Ground cardamom .....	½ tsp.
Light corn syrup .....	2/3 cup	Ground nutmeg .....	¼ tsp.
Unsulphured molasses .....	2 Tbsp.	Fine sea salt .....	½ tsp.

## Directions

Preheat oven to  $350^{\circ}\text{F}$  — Grease and line a 9x9 inch baking pan with parchment paper (leaving overhang for easy removal) — Toast **nuts** at  $350^{\circ}\text{F}$  for *8-10 minutes* until fragrant, cool, rub in towel to remove skins if applicable, then finely chop — Finely chop **dried fruit** — Place chopped **fruit** in small bowl, cover with warm water, soak *10 minutes*, drain thoroughly, and pat dry with paper towels

1. In a large bowl, combine **oats**, chopped **nuts**, **cinnamon**, **cardamom**, **nutmeg**, and **salt**. Mix well and set aside.
2. In a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, combine **butter**, **corn syrup**, **molasses**, and **brown sugar**. Stir constantly until **butter** is melted and **sugar** is dissolved, about *3-4 minutes*. Do not allow mixture to boil.
3. Remove from heat and stir in **vanilla**.
4. Pour the **butter** mixture over the **oat** mixture and stir thoroughly until all **oats** are evenly coated and mixture is well combined.
5. Add the drained, chopped **fruit** and fold in gently but thoroughly to distribute evenly throughout.

6. Transfer mixture to prepared baking pan. Press down very firmly and evenly with the back of a spatula or measuring cup to compact the mixture — this is critical for achieving cohesive bars.
7. Bake for *30 minutes* until golden brown throughout. The edges will be slightly darker and the center should be set but still give slightly when pressed.
8. Remove from oven and allow to cool in pan for *10 minutes*. Using a sharp knife, cut into bars while still warm (12 or 16 bars depending on desired size).
9. Allow bars to cool completely in the pan, at least *2 hours*, before removing. The bars will firm up significantly as they cool.
10. Once completely cool, use parchment overhang to lift from pan. Separate bars along pre-cut lines and store in an airtight container.

## Fruit and Nut Pairings

- **Cherry + Hazelnut** — Classic pairing with deep, complementary flavors
- **Apricot + Almond** — Mediterranean combination, honeyed and nutty
- **Cranberry + Pecan** — Tart-sweet with buttery richness
- **Fig + Walnut** — Sophisticated, earthy sweetness
- **Blueberry + Macadamia** — Subtle berry with rich, creamy nuts
- **Raisin + Cashew** — Traditional, mild pairing

## Equipment Required

- 9x9 inch baking pan
- Parchment paper
- Large mixing bowl (at least 4-quart capacity)
- Medium saucepan (2-3 quart)
- Small bowl (for soaking fruit)
- Rimmed baking sheet (for toasting nuts)
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Rubber spatula or wooden spoon
- Measuring cup or flat-bottomed glass (for pressing)
- Kitchen towel (for removing nut skins)
- Paper towels (for drying fruit)

- For **dried fruit**: choose unsweetened or lightly sweetened varieties; tart cherries, unsulphured apricots, and less-sweetened cranberries provide best flavor balance
- Light **corn syrup** (Karo) combined with **molasses** approximates British golden syrup
- European-style **butter** with higher fat content yields richer flavor

## Preparation Tips

- Chop **nuts** and **fruit** finely for even distribution and cohesive texture
- Don't skip soaking the **fruit** — this prevents hard, dry bits in final bars
- Press mixture very firmly into pan; inadequate pressing results in crumbly bars
- Watch carefully during final 5 minutes of baking to prevent over-browning
- Cut while warm but allow complete cooling for clean cuts and proper texture
- If bars seem too soft after cooling, they may need 5 minutes more baking time next batch

## Make Ahead & Storage

- Flapjacks keep at room temperature in airtight container for up to 1 week
- Layer bars between parchment paper to prevent sticking
- Freeze for up to 3 months; thaw at room temperature for 30 minutes
- Texture firms slightly during storage; this is normal
- Do not refrigerate as this can make bars overly hard

## Mise en Place

- Toast and chop **nuts** first, as they need time to cool
- Soak **dried fruit** while preparing other ingredients
- Measure all spices and have them ready before starting
- Cut parchment paper to fit pan with overhang on two sides
- Have all ingredients at room temperature for easier mixing

## Ingredient Tips

- Use certified gluten-free **oats** if needed; regular rolled oats work well otherwise
- For **nuts**: toast until fragrant to intensify flavor; hazelnuts and almonds benefit from skin removal

## Serving Suggestions

- Serve as breakfast bars, snacks, or with afternoon tea
- Pair with coffee, tea, or cold milk
- For dessert, serve warm with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream
- Pack individually in parchment paper for portable snacks
- Drizzle with melted chocolate for special occasions