

Nut-Free Chewy Granola Bars

COOK'S
ILLUSTRATED

✓ WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

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](#)

- 2 1/2 cups (7 1/2 ounces) old-fashioned rolled oats
 1 cup raw sunflower seeds
 1 cup raw pepitas
 1/4 cup sesame seeds
 1/4 cup chia seeds
 1 cup dried apricots
 1 cup packed (7 ounces) brown sugar
 3/4 teaspoon salt
 1/2 cup vegetable oil
 3 tablespoons water
 2 cups (2 ounces) Rice Krispies cereal

*13 by 9-Inch Baking Pans/Dishes***BUY WINNER***Food Processors***BUY WINNER***Rimmed Baking Sheets***BUY WINNER**

FROM THE SHOP

INSTRUCTIONS

MAKES 24 BARS

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. Spread oats, sunflower seeds, pepitas, sesame seeds, and chia 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 stir gently until ingredients are evenly mixed. Transfer mixture to prepared pan and spread into even layer. Place 14-inch sheet of parchment paper 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.

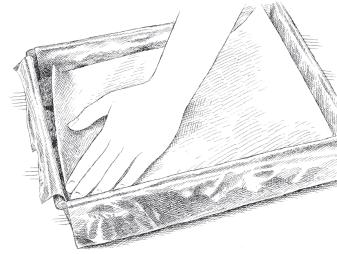
5. Discard foil and transfer granola to cutting board. Using chef's knife, cut granola in half crosswise to create two 6½ by 9-inch rectangles. Cut each rectangle in half to make four 3¼ by 9-inch strips. Cut each strip crosswise into 6 equal pieces. (Granola bars can be stored at room temperature for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

Share photos, tips, and questions about **Nut-Free Chewy Granola Bars** with fellow fans!

2 Comments

JC JOHN C. 16 DAYS

Absolutely the best chicken ever, even the breast meat

Try All-Access Membership

to Unlock the Comments

Don't miss the conversation. Our test cooks and editors jump in to answer your questions, and our members are curious, opinionated, and respectful.

Membership includes instant access to everything on our sites:

- **10,000+ foolproof recipes**
and why they work
- **Taste Tests**
of supermarket ingredients
- **Equipment Reviews**
save you money and time
- **Videos**
including full episodes and clips
- **Live Q&A**
with Test Kitchen experts

START FREE TRIAL

those who wondered if it would work) and it turned out great. A "make again" as my family rates things. This is a great recipe, and I will definitely make it again. My butcher gladly butterflied the chicken for me, therefore I found it to be a fast and easy prep. I used my cast iron skillet- marvellous!