

## Granola Bars

I found the recipe online at (<http://www.joyfulabode.com/2008/04/11/homemade-granola-bar-recipe-no-high-fructose-corn-syrup-in-these-bars/>) then I made some modifications. Start with the basic recipe & add or leave out according to your preferences. I plan to try adding protein powder just as I am mixing dry & wet ingredients to try to make them even more of an energy bar.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.

Gather your ingredients:

- 2 cups whole oats
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup wheat germ, or milled flax, or mix 50/50, (whole flax seed may work but I have not tried it)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sunflower seeds
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup pumpkin seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup shredded coconut (optional)
- 1 cup peanuts, crushed (can substitute almonds, pecans, walnuts, etc.)
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup honey
- 4 Tbsp butter
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp Kosher salt
- approximately 8 oz. dried fruit
- about  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup 60% chocolate chips (optional)

To crush your peanuts, put them in a plastic bag and smash them with a heavy mallet, measuring cup, or sauce pan. (I just pulse them in my little food processor.)

Then, mix the peanuts, oats, wheat germ, and sunflower seeds in a baking dish with sides. Toast them in the oven for 10-12 minutes, stirring every few minutes so that they don't get burned. (Toasting more or less changes the flavor)

Meanwhile, prepare a glass baking dish (about 11 x 13 inches) for your granola by lining it with waxed paper lightly sprayed with a nonstick spray.

Put the brown sugar, honey, butter, vanilla, and salt into a saucepan and bring to a simmer, stirring constantly.

By now, your grains and nuts should be toasted, so mix everything together in a large bowl. The grains, the liquid "glue," and the dried fruit & choco. chips. Oh, and turn off your oven, because you're finished with it now.

Mix everything REALLY WELL because you want to make sure the "glue" gets all over everything. Now, dump your granola mixture into your prepared baking dish.

Spread out the mixture with a wooden spoon or spatula.

Now fold over the sides of the waxed paper or add a sheet on top, and PRESS HARD all over the granola. You want to compact it together so that your bars won't fall apart when you cut them.

Wait 2-3 hours or until the granola has totally cooled. (my family does not let me wait this long)

Then, open the waxed paper ... place on cutting board & cut into desired serving sizes.

These are full of good energy sources and have been well liked by my swimmer & all who have tried them.

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