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## Chewy Caramel(ish) Granola Bars

February 7, 2014, written by katie

Okay, okay, this one's a little more 'involved'! But that's just the way some things are. Sometimes ya gotta give a little extra effort for the desired result. You see, I was looking for new recipes after I determined my oldest's need to go gluten free. There's a whole story leading up to it, but it's the post-story that's sent me on a roller coaster looking for real-food, nutrient dense kid-friendly concoctions without the instigating ingredient...gluten.

She's six, after all! She wants to eat what the rest of the kiddos consume...which never was really the case anyways since her lunches have always been bursting at the seams with real, whole foods, great grains and packed with produce. No, no, I never judge the lunches of others! I promise. It's just the nutritional standards I hold for my own little family of three. The point is that my daughter's lunches looked different from the start so she's used to it and part of me thinks she revels in the mysteriousness of her food repertoire. But, when we started eliminating gluten, the idea of restriction didn't go over well. After a brief honeymoon stage of her wanting to try new things, she realized that she's not returning to her old ways. Tears, pouts and negotiations ensued.

Finally, I think we've hit a stride. I regularly remind her:

- God made us all very special with unique needs....this looks like it is one of yours!
- We are only removing one ingredient but you can still have the same kinds of foods
- I promise we will keep experimenting with new recipes until we find new favorites (and we have been!)

Which brings me back to these chewy bits of sweet goodness disguised as a granola bar. They were first introduced to us by my Mom, the recipe-lover. After applying a couple tweaks (like daughters do!), these really hit the spot for my nutritional standards!

Yes, they do require a little more work, but I tell ya, it's worth it! Well, worth it for me, anyways, when I saw the smiles on my daughter's face! She even wanted to bring them to share with her class.

The variety of seeds and dried fruit makes for a nice nutrient profile including antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, vegetarian protein and a good amount of good fats. Then, the texture truly tempts me to go back for more....and more....and more. I just love how they turned out!

I hope you try them and tell me what you think!

## Recipe category

[Snacks and This & That](#) [1]

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## Restricted to members

1

## Ingredients

- 3 cups old fashioned oats\*
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup raw walnut pieces
- ½ cup golden raisins
- ½ cup cranberries
- ¾ cup chopped apricots
- ½ cup unsweetened coconut flakes
- ½ cup raw pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 1 cup ground walnuts\*\*
- ¾ cup butter (I like the REAL stuff....grassfed is ideal in my opinion)
- ⅔ cup raw honey
- ½ to ¾ cup coconut sugar (to your liking)

## Recipe Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 375F. Line a 11X7 baking pan with parchment paper.
- In a bowl mix the oats, cinnamon, salt, fruit, seeds, walnuts and coconut flakes.
- In a sauce pan add the butter and honey. Heat gently until the butter has melted.
- Add the sugar keeping the pan over the lowest flame your stove has. Stir constantly until the sugar is completely dissolved. Bring the mixture to a boil, and continue to boil for another minute or two constantly stirring the mixture until it has formed a smooth caramel sauce.
- Pour over the dry ingredients, mix with a wooden spoon and scoop it into the prepared pan.
- With the back of the spoon or of a measuring cup press down the mixture.
- Bake for 15 minutes until the edges begin to brown.
- Take it out of the oven, let it cool slightly and then chill in the fridge for a couple of hours.
- When completely cooled cut into bars.

## Featured Image



## Recipe Description

If you're one of those with a hankering for a sweet, chewy treat from time to time, these are sure to hit that sweet spot...without compromising the nourishment your body needs. The combination of oats, seeds and dried fruit offers lots of phytonutrients and fiber. Super satisfying! They also happen to be gluten free in case you care about that.

## Recipe Notes

\*Be sure to use certified gluten free oats if you want them to be gluten free.

\*\*You can buy ground walnuts or you can do it yourself in a food processor or nut chopper. Just don't keep the processor on too long b/c you will get walnut butter.

A note on dried fruit: I always prefer to purchase organic, unsulphured dried fruit without any added sweeteners and artificial colors.

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### Links

[1] <https://www.livinghappilywhole.com/recipe-category/snacks-and>

[2] <https://www.livinghappilywhole.com/recipe-category/sinless-sweet-treats>