

DRIED CHERRY GRANOLA BARS

The perfect on-the-go breakfast or snack! These store in the fridge for a week or two.

by Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski, MSU Culinary Services

Featured Food: dried cherries

Yield: Makes an 8x8 pan

Ingredients

½ c. chopped pecans	½ c. honey
½ c. sliced almonds	¼ c. light brown sugar
½ c. chopped walnuts	¼ c. pure maple syrup
¾ c. coarsely chopped dried cherries	1 t. vanilla extract
2 c. old fashioned oats	½ t. cinnamon
½ c. roasted unsalted sunflower seeds	¼ t. cardamom
2 T. ground flaxseed	Pinch of nutmeg
¼ c. canola oil	1 t. kosher salt

Preparation

Preheat oven to 375° F. Spread nuts on a cookie sheet and toast them in the oven for 6–8 minutes or until they just begin to brown.

Place cherries in small bowl; add warm water to barely cover and soak for a few minutes. Mix oats, sunflower seeds, flaxseed and nuts in large bowl. Drain cherries and stir them in.

In a small saucepan, mix the remaining ingredients and cook over medium-high heat. Stir to avoid burning. Once the syrup comes to a light boil, cook for another 3–5 minutes until it begins to thicken. Add to the large bowl and mix until the syrup evenly coats everything.

Pour the warm granola mixture into an 8" x 8" baking dish generously greased with butter. Use a spatula to pat down until evenly compacted. Place parchment paper on top; using your fingertips, press firmly all over (this will help the bars hold together).

Bake for 20 minutes, rotating the dish after 10 minutes for more even baking. Let cool to room temperature. Refrigerating for a bit will make cutting easier. Cut into squares or rectangles.