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Homemade Granola Bars, Gluten Free and GREAT!

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For some things in life, there's just not much to say. There's no way to describe in words the real life experience. You have to tangibly try it for yourself to feel the appreciation or unique sensations.

For me one of those things is the amazing experience of camping in the Canadian north woods. I just can't explain it in a way that justifies the feeling of being there. In fact, to some it might sound horrific. You drink water from the middle of the lake, protect yourself from flesh-eating flies by day and voracious mosquitoes by night and you hope your wilderness partner steers clear from the path you've chosen for your personal potty. Food's not great (unless you filet a fish you caught and kept fresh), the supply packs you carry are bigger than two of my bodies together and tearing down the tent three times in a week as you explore new areas to set up camp gets all but fatiguing.

To me, there's nothing more worth the hassle than the Canadian north woods. I've never experienced something more like a soul reviving respite than those clear fresh waters, uneven lush landscapes and crisp cleansing air. The solitary peace of that place makes me feel so small yet so soulfully significant to the God who created it. It's a different world.

When you wake, the most beautiful fog tip toes on the water filling the space between water and sky. Then as you press off the shore in a canoe filled with nothing but you and the one you love, some fishing gear and a Bible, silence fills the entire atmosphere with a sense of awe oozing from God's great creation. Nature in it's purest. The plop of a fish, the croak of a frog and the crackle of a log stepped on by some wild animal form distinctly pleasing sounds as the entire experience etches itself in your mind's memory. If you ask me about my favorite vacation, ah, yes, This is it. It's the only real kind of retreat I've tried.

I could fill pages about the bliss of my canoeing and portaging trips to the Boundary waters with Kevin. Maybe someday I will write more. For now, I'll envision his heaven just like that.

And while he enjoys peace in his heavenly retreat, I'll keep trying to create peace here at home. Part of my peaceful pursuits occur in the kitchen. Creating, sharing and, yes, consuming food offers peace to my soul. Silly as it may sound, it's a little love language of mine.

I'm not sure what it was about these granola bars that conjured up my trips to Canada...maybe it's because several of their ingredients made it into our camping trail mix: oats, chocolate, peanuts, almonds, sunflower seeds.

Food does that, you know. Certain combinations conjure feelings and stir our minds to precious memories. Maybe that's what I love so much about it.

Or it could be because making **real food** for my family is something I relish. It's a privilege and a sense of simplicity I feel from creating and serving up something so real and enjoyable.

It's one of those things that I can't explain...but I want you to experience it, too: making homemade, real food for your family and friends is like sharing what's in your heart to make theirs healthier. It'll make you feel like you're stirring love up in a bowl, then baking it together as a way to fill your loved ones' bodies and souls.

Food has that appeal, that quality of caring if you treat it that way. It's got a way of showing love when you put a little heart into the mix. I never hesitate to hand over something wholesome when my girls are hungry. ***I've made it with my heart and my hands, a simple gesture of nourishment and it's what they deserve: good health and heart-filled food.***

So this summer, these granola bars will make their way on picnics, road trips and for afternoon snacks. Try them out and add a little of your loving care. Experience for yourself the soul-satisfaction of putting your heart into wholesome food for your family.

Recipe category

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

[Clean Eating Kids](#) ^[2]

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Ingredients

- 3 ½ cups old fashioned oats
- ⅔ cups sunflower seeds
- ½ cup sesame seeds
- ½ cup millet*
- ½ cup oat bran
- ¼ cup shredded, unsweetened coconut
- 3 tablespoons milled flax
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 tsp sea salt (I used Celtic Sea Salt)**
- ¾ cup natural peanut butter***
- ¾ cup natural almond butter***
- ¾ cup raw, organic (local if possible) honey
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter (yep, the real kind--grassfed if you can find it)
- ½ cup mini dark chocolate chips or chopped dark chocolate

Recipe Instructions

- Preheat oven to 225 degrees F and prepare your jelly roll pan (10x15) with parchment paper.
- In a large bowl (I used my stand mixer bowl), combine the dry ingredients on the list: oats through salt. Stir until all ingredients are mixed and evenly distributed.
- In another bowl, combine the peanut butter, almond butter, honey and butter. Mix by hand. It doesn't have to be completely mixed together. Pour over the dry ingredients and MIX all of the ingredients together using wooden spoon and elbow grease or stand mixer.
- Add the chocolate chips and mix again.
- Dump the mixture into your prepared pan and press it down. I cannot stress enough how important it is to press the mixture firmly into the pan evenly. Just when you think you've compacted it all down as much as you can, press a little more. Get a little workout in, why not?!
- Put in the oven for about 30 to 35 minutes. I bake them a bit longer at a low temperature in order to preserve the quality and nutrients of the nuts and seeds (which can get bad at high heats).
- Remove from oven and let cool completely. Cut into whatever shape and size you like!
- **TIP:** I freeze our granola bars in an airtight container with parchment paper between the layers. They will not stay good for more than a few days on the counter because there are no preservatives.

Featured Image



Gallery





Recipe Description

I've made several [granola bar recipes](#) [3] in my day. This one is a gluten free makeover of

one of our favorites. It's satisfying crunch along with the peanut buttery taste and how nicely they stay together truly make them our new favorites.

Recipe Notes

*I love millet. It's a little, yellowish grain that can be used in some baked goods or cooked on it's own. It offers a great little crunch! I also use them in these [muffins](#) [4].

**Yes, the quality of salt you use is important. Here's a nice article that explains why from [Dr. Josh Axe.](#) [5]

***Nut butters: I just want to define what I mean when I say 'natural'. Be sure to look at ingredient labels. All you need to make a great nut butter is the NUT..sometimes a touch of salt is okay, that's up to you. Natural nut butters will be a little 'grainy' perhaps and you have to stir the oil in then store in the fridge.

[Buy millet here](#) [6].

[Buy milled flax here](#) [7]

[Buy unsweetened coconut here](#) [8]

[Buy oat bran here](#) [9] (this kind is gluten free...not all are)

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[5] <http://draxe.com/10-benefits-celtic-sea-salt-himalayan-salt/>

[6] http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00CBT1EVM/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B00CBT1EVM&linkCode=as2&tag=happwhol-20&linkId=6IG2UNMKLBVXJ74N

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