Break to WORK BACK TO WORK B

Start your week the right way with our homemade granola

Writing | Ellen Hoggard

ranola is one of my favourite breakfasts. The first time I made a batch at home. I couldn't believe how simple it was, and it was so delicious I don't think I'll ever go back to shop-bought. Whether you go for a classic milk and granola combo, as a voghurt topping, or simply a snack, the flavour and texture is just so good. A bit of sugar, a dash of spice, and the fruits that fill your fancy, this recipe is the basis for a breakfast you can make your own.

As summer rolls into autumn, we often fall back into a routine. School starts, everyone is back at work, and new projects are set to begin. So, you need to be nourished ahead of your day. As you prepare for the week, simply set an hour aside to bake this delicious granola, and you'll be set for at least the next few days... as long as you don't eat it all at once.

Our nutrition expert Michelle Boehm gives us some insight: "This is a well-balanced breakfast with plenty of carbohydrates (oats), fats (coconut oil), and protein (nuts). It's vegan, and can be gluten-free if you opt for gluten-free oats. The carbs are slow-releasing, keeping you fuller for longer, reducing the urge to snack and overeat at lunchtime.

"Adding protein and cinnamon to your meal supports blood sugar balancing. The slow release of sugars in the food helps to boost energy levels, control mood swings, and reduce cravings. If you would like to reduce the sugar content further, omit the syrup and dried fruit, although this may make your granola slightly less sticky.

"The fats in coconut oil are medium chain triglycerides (MCTs) which are said to provide your brain with quick energy, and raise the good HDL cholesterol in your blood. This breakfast is also rich in fibre, with almonds containing more fibre than any other nut. Fibre binds to water and waste in the colon to pass out of the body easily, regulating bowel movements."

You will need ...

4 cups rolled oats
1 cup pecans
1 cup almonds
2 tbsp agave or maple syrup
1/2 cup coconut oil

1/2 tsp cinnamon

1/2 tsp salt

1 tbsp dried cranberries 1 tbsp dried apricots, chopped

1/2 cup coconut flakes

Optional: Chocolate chips



Michelle Boehm is a nutritional therapist and health coach. Find out more at livebetterhealth.co.uk



Method

10 SERVINGS

Preheat the oven to 180C/350C, gas mark 4, and line a large rimmed baking tray with parchment paper. Put aside.

Combine the oats, salt, cinnamon, pecans and almonds. In a small bowl, melt the coconut oil and add the agave syrup. Slowly, combine the wet ingredients with the oats until fully coated.

Add to the baking tray, distributing evenly and pressing down so the mixture sticks together.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, stirring halfway. For larger clusters, press the stirred granola down with your spatula before returning to the oven. When golden brown, remove and leave to cool.

When the granola has completely cooled, break the granola into pieces with your hands. Add the dried fruit, coconut and, if using, chocolate chips. Gently mix with your hands, ensuring you don't break the clusters.

Store in an airtight container at room temperature (this will keep your granola fresh for up to two weeks). Alternatively, you can freeze your granola for up to three months – simply remove it from the freezer 15 minutes before serving.

Serve as a yoghurt topping, or with a milk of choice. Delicious.

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