

Granola

For sure, I did not grow up with granola as a staple for breakfast on Guam. As a young adult, I didn't care much for it either because it has a hefty amount of calories! However, after stumbling upon a homemade granola recipe by "Megan" on allrecipes.com, and my family loving it, I've gotten around to eating a small serving twice a week.

All nuts and seeds should be unsalted. I hand chop all the nuts; this gives me a mixture of powdered to small pieces of walnuts, pecans and almonds.

Makes 30, ½-cup servings (without the additional, whole, dried cranberries)

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

8 c. rolled oats (not the instant variety)

1 ½ c. wheat germ

1 ½ c. oat bran

1 c. sunflower seeds, **unsalted** (or a mix of sunflower, cashews and pumpkin seeds)

1 c. finely chopped pecans, chopped first then measured (about 4 ounces)

1 c. finely chopped, roasted, almonds, chopped first then measured (about 4.5 ounces)

1 c. finely chopped walnuts, chopped first then measured (about 4 ounces)

Set 2

1 ½ tsp. salt

½ c. + 2 T. pure maple syrup

2 T. honey

1 c. canola oil

1 T. ground cinnamon

1 T. vanilla extract

Set 3

2 c. roughly chopped, dried, sweetened cranberries, chopped then measured, (optional)

Set 4

1 cup whole, dried cranberries (optional)

Tools: *very large bowl, small pot, 2 large baking pans with at least 2-inch rims (2 inches deep), nonstick spray, rubber spatula, cooling racks, Ziploc freezer bags*

Note: I use the Wilton rectangular cake pans measuring in lengths 15 and 18 inches. All pans are 2 inches deep.

DIRECTIONS

1. Separate the racks in your oven; don't put the top rack too close to the upper element.
2. **Preheat the oven to 250 degrees Fahrenheit.**
3. Spray both baking pans.
4. Combine all of set 2 in the small pot. Stir together.
5. Heat the pot on medium heat. Stir occasionally until the mixture comes to a boil and the salt and sweeteners are dissolved.
6. While waiting for the wet ingredients to come to a boil, mix the oats, wheat germ, oat bran, sunflower seeds and all the nuts together in your largest baking pan. Set aside.
7. Pour the liquid mix over the mixture in the baking pan.

8. Use the spatula to combine the ingredients until the wet mixture has cooled down a bit.
9. Use both hands to thoroughly incorporate the dry mixture with the wet mixture. Distribute the combined mixture between the two baking pans.
10. Put one pan on the top rack, toward the back and to the far left.
11. Place the other pan on the bottom rack, toward the front and far right.
12. Bake for 15 minutes.
13. Remove the pans and stir.
14. Place the pans back in the oven, alternating their position.
15. Continue to bake and stir at 15-minute intervals for a total of 1 hour and 45 minutes, alternating positions with every interval.
16. Cool completely on a wire rack.
17. Add the chopped cranberries, stirring to thoroughly distribute.
18. Add the whole cranberries, especially if you like big bursts of flavor here and there in your granola. Keep in mind that the longer you store the granola, the more moisture the cranberries will lose and become hard. Consider leaving the cranberries out until you are ready to eat.
19. Store in airtight containers or Ziploc freezer bags.
20. Enjoy a ½ cup of granola with just enough milk to cover the cereal. If you put too much milk, it will be difficult to eat your granola.

Note: You may leave the cranberries out and top with a variety of chopped, dried fruit. One day you may prefer dried mango while another day it may be dried blueberries. My husband loves it mixed with cranberries then later topped with a bit of chopped, dried mango.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of www.PaulaQ.com.