

BRYANNA'S JUST-ABOUT-FAT-FREE HOMEMADE MAPLE-CHERRY-COCONUT GRANOLA (WITH NUTTY ORANGE-APRICOT-COCONUT VARIATION)

Yield: 4 cups; Servings: 8

This recipe is adapted from one in my book "The Fiber for Life Cookbook". NOTE: Without fruit, this makes a good nut substitute for low-fat baking.

2 cups oatmeal (or other rolled whole grain cereal)
3/4 cup whole wheat flour, or any other whole grain flour
1/2 cup wheat bran, oat bran or rice bran
1/3 cup maple syrup
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup unsweetened desiccated coconut
1/2 cup dried tart cherries

VARIATION: NUTTY ORANGE-APRICOT-COCONUT GRANOLA

For the sweetener, use 1/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate and 2 tablespoons agave nectar

Instead of 1/2 cup coconut, use only 3 tablespoons coconut, along with 1/3 cup chopped pecans or other nuts

Add 1/2 teaspoon pure orange extract, orange oil or 1 tablespoon grated organic orange zest

Instead of the dried cherries, use 1/2 cup chopped dried apricots

NOTE: You need a 2.2 cubic ft. capacity microwave for this recipe. Mine is 1200 watts. If yours is weaker, you may have to cook it in 3 minutes increments instead of 2 minute ones.

Mix all of the ingredients (except the dried fruit) together thoroughly in a medium bowl.

Spread the mixture evenly on baking parchment cut to fit the microwave carousel.

Cook on full power for 2 minutes. Stir gently and spread out evenly again. Cook 2 minutes more, stir gently, and push the granola in the center of the carousel out toward the edges, leaving an empty space in the center of the carousel about 3-4 inches across. The reason for doing this is that the center tends to burn towards the end of cooking. Cook for 2 minutes more. The mixture should be light golden.

Dump the granola onto a baking sheet with sides and add the dried fruit. Cool completely, stirring once in a while.

When completely cool, store in an airtight container.

Nutrition (per 1/2 cup serving): 220.5 calories; 18% calories from fat; 4.9g total fat; 0.0mg cholesterol; 64.5mg sodium; 213.2mg potassium; 41.7g carbohydrates; 6.3g fiber; 8.6g sugar; 35.5g net carbs; 5.9g protein; 4.0 points.