

Fabulous Food

Figs And Ginger Spice Up Homemade Granola Bars

(NAPSA)—Granola bars are rapidly replacing traditional breakfast fare throughout the country. They're portable, portion controlled and tasty. Unfortunately, many of the commercial bars also come filled with sweet, candylike ingredients, preservatives and artificial flavors.

Making homemade granola bars offers a fun and creative way to give you exactly what you want—a healthy, on-the-go bar filled with natural fig goodness. The test cooks at one of public television's top-rated cooking shows, "Cook's Country from America's Test Kitchen," created this foolproof recipe.

Granola Bars with Dried Figs and Ginger updates the classic granola bar recipe with sweet, fiber-rich, dried California Mission and Calimyrna figs and crystallized ginger. Dried figs offer a wealth of nutritional value including iron, potassium and calcium. Interchangeable in most recipes, Mission figs have smaller seeds and a bit sweeter flavor, while Calimyrna figs have a slightly nutty flavor, more developed seeds and a firmer, chewier skin. Wrapped in plastic, these delicious granola bars keep for up to two weeks. Grab one for breakfast on your way out the door, toss one in your gym bag and serve them to your kids for an after-school snack.

For more recipes, go to www.valleyfig.com and www.cooksountrytv.com.



Sweet and fiber-full California Mission and Calimyrna figs can be a fabulous addition to practically any dish.

Granola Bars with Dried Figs and Ginger

Makes about 36 bars

- 7 cups old-fashioned rolled oats**
- ½ cup vegetable oil**
- ½ teaspoon table salt**
- ¾ cup honey**
- ¾ cup packed light-brown sugar**
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract**
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon (optional)**
- 1½ cups whole almonds, pecans, peanuts or walnuts, coarsely chopped**
- 1 cup diced Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid figs (about 6 ounces), stems removed**
- ¼ cup chopped crystallized ginger**

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375° F. Toss oats, oil and salt together in large bowl; spread out over 12-by-18-inch baking sheet and bake, stirring often, until pale gold, 20 to 25 minutes.

2. While oats are toasting, heat honey and brown sugar in small saucepan over medium heat, stirring frequently, until sugar is fully dissolved, about 5 minutes. Stir in vanilla and cinnamon (if using) and set aside.

3. Remove oats from oven and lower oven temperature to 300° F. Transfer toasted oats to large bowl and toss with honey mixture until evenly coated. Stir in nuts, dried figs and crystallized ginger.

4. Line 12-by-18-inch baking sheet with aluminum foil, then coat lightly with vegetable oil spray. Spread oat mixture out on prepared pan, then pack tightly into even layer using wet metal spatula. Bake until golden, 35 to 40 minutes.

5. Let cool on wire rack for 15 minutes, then cut into 2-by-3-inch bars in pan. Let cool completely before removing from pan.

NOTE: Quick-cooking oats cannot be substituted for the old-fashioned oats here because their texture becomes too sandy when toasted.