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Date and Apricot Granola Squares

Ingredients

200g fine oats 65g sunflower seeds
50g sesame seeds
35g pumpkin seeds
30g walnut halves
30g blanched almonds
100g dates
50g apricots
100g butter
75g soft brown sugar
4 tablespoons of golden syrup

Preparation

1. 1. Preheat the oven to 160 degrees, 140 degrees fan oven. Lightly grease a 22cm square deep baking tin then line the bottom with baking parchment. 2. In a separate dry baking tray, mix the oats, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds, then toast in the oven for 8-10 minutes. [I think fine oats are better for this recipe than jumbo oats as they pack together more easily in the granola squares.]
2. 3. Meanwhile, toast the sesame seeds gently in a small saucepan for just a few minutes.
3. 4. Chop the walnuts and almonds into small pieces, or pulse them briefly a few times in a food processor.
4. 5. Remove the date stones then chop the dates and the apricots into small pieces.
5. 6. Cut the butter into small pieces and put it in a large saucepan with the sugar and golden syrup, then gently melt and stir them together. Add the oats, seeds, chopped nuts and fruit, stirring well to coat them with the syrup mixture and mix everything together.
6. 7. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin, making sure to get it up to the edges and into the corners, level it out, then press it down hard with the back of a metal spoon to pack it down really firmly. Bake for 25-30 minutes.
7. 8. Allow it to cool for a few minutes in the tin
8. you need to cut it when it is just warm rather than hot, but if it cools too much it tends to break unevenly. Mark it into 20 squares then cut firmly and lift the pieces out. Once cooled completely, keep in an airtight tin.

Cooks Note

These yummy granola squares are crunchy on the edges but squidgy and chewy in the centre, and packed with a variety of nuts and seeds, and sweet sticky dates and apricots. Just one of these is a great snack when you need an energy boost, after exercise or when the next meal just seems a long way off. Or try them as an occasional treat in lunchboxes; so much better than bought bars.

They keep really well in an airtight tin, becoming stickier and even chewier, if there are any left!

This recipe will make 20 squares.