

FRUIT & NUT BARS *with real maple syrup*

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Equipment: 8 inch square baking pan, parchment paper

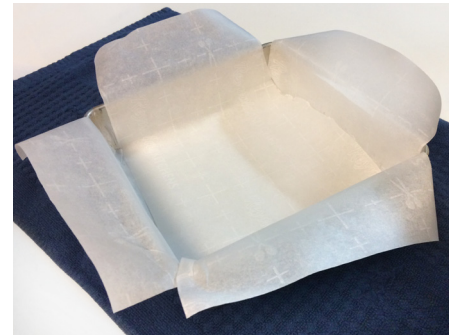
Substitutions: Swap nuts & fruits to your taste. Honey can be used instead of maple syrup, but bars will be stickier.

- 1 1/3 cups of unsalted nuts. I use toasted almonds, pecans, and walnuts. **Measure nuts first, then coarsely chop them.**
- 1/3 cup dried fruit. I use cranberries or cherries with toasted coconut flakes. **Coarsely chop fruit first, then measure.**
- 1/4 cup crispy rice cereal
- 1/4 cup seeds. I use toasted pepitas and sunflower seeds within the mix. Optional: Sprinkle sesame seeds on top of the bars before baking.
- 1/4 cup PURE Maple Syrup
- 1/8 teaspoon salt (omit if you use salted nuts)
- Optional spices: Cinnamon or vanilla bean paste or extract
- Optional scoop of Vanilla Protein Powder or Powdered Bone Broth (if adding powder, you may need a tad more liquid sweetener if the mixture becomes too dry. If too dry, the bars may not stick together well)



Decorate bars with custom labels from [CanningCrafts.com](https://www.canningcrafts.com)

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.
2. Line an 8 inch square pan with parchment paper. Cut 2 strips of parchment paper and layer them in the pan. The paper will hang over the pan edges. You'll be able to lift the final bars out of the pan by pulling up the parchment paper. You can use sprayed aluminum foil instead, but the bars may stick more.
3. Add nuts, dried fruit, and seeds to bowl. Stir in the maple syrup, salt, optional spices and protein powders until coated.
4. Dump into prepared 8 inch square pan and press down evenly with the back of your spoon. Sprinkle with sesame seeds if desired.
5. Bake 18 minutes. **The bars will not look done. They will be soft.**
6. Cool bars in the pan for about 15 minutes.
7. Once cool, fold the parchment paper overhang back onto the nut bars and press down firmly with your hands. This will help compress the bars so they hold together better.
8. Lift bars out of pan using the parchment paper overhang. Place on cutting board. Don't remove parchment paper yet!
9. Cut bars into 8 equal sized pieces. Cool completely before removing from the parchment paper.
10. You can slide your knife under the bars to help scoop them off the paper more easily. If the bars are slightly falling apart, you can place them back in the pan and place in the fridge to firm up some more.
11. Store in airtight container layered with wax paper for up to 2 weeks. You can also store these in the refrigerator if you want. This may help the bars stay together more. If the weather is warm, sometimes the bars can fall apart a bit more.



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