

Grain-free Granola

This recipe is an invitation to play and use a wide variety of ingredients. Choose the ones that you like and tailor it to your taste. Often, I find myself simply cleaning out the pantry and experimenting with new combinations. Trader Joe's is a great place to find raw nuts and a wide variety of dried and dehydrated fruits.

Core ingredients:

- Raw nuts & seeds
- Eggs*
- Honey/Agave/Maple Syrup
- Dried or Dehydrated Fruit

What you will need:

- Cookie Sheet with Edges
- Wax or Parchment Paper
- Food Processor, Chopper or Knife

Types of nuts & seeds that work well:

- Walnuts, raw
- Cashews, raw or roasted and salted
- Almonds, raw
- Peanuts, honey or dry roasted
- Pecans, raw
- Sunflower seeds, raw
- Shelled pumpkin seeds, raw
- Any other nut or seed that you like

Types of fruit that work well (be sure to check the ingredients for added sugar. A little is okay.)

- Raisins
- Craisins
- Dried Apples (chopped)
- Dried Mango (chopped)
- Dried Pineapple (chopped)
- Dried Cherries
- Dehydrated Blueberries
- Dehydrated Strawberries
- Any other dehydrated or dried fruit that you like

Flavors to add:

- Coco powder
- Cajun Seasoning
- Cinnamon

Enjoy granola with fresh fruit, in yogurt, as a topping on ice cream, or just as it is.

*if eggs are not possible for you, you can use an extra tbs of honey, agave, peanut butter, or maple syrup. The eggs help bind it together and keep it more as a bar. If you skip the eggs, the granola will have more of a crumbly texture but it is still delicious!

Basic Steps for Grain Free Granola- you choose the nuts, fruit and additional flavors.

- ✓ In a large mixing bowl, add 6 cups of finely chopped nuts. Use a variety of nuts or just what you have in the pantry. If using seeds as well, keep it to 1-2 cups of seeds & 4-5 cups of nuts.
- ✓ Add 3 cups of dried/dehydrated fruit (chopped if large pieces). Mix the two together.
- ✓ Scramble 2 eggs and add to the mix.
- ✓ Add 2 tbs of honey, agave or real maple syrup to the bowl and stir. The combination should look sticky.
- ✓ Cover the baking sheet with wax or parchment paper.
- ✓ Press the granola mixture into the pan. Pressing the granola up to the edges. You want the granola to be between $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Press down the granola some more until it is packed in tight. Use more than one cookie sheet if it's too thick.
- ✓ Sprinkle with salt. (do this step for every variation unless you are using salted nuts or are looking for a low salt item)
- ✓ Place in preheated 375-degree oven.
- ✓ Set timer for 15 minutes and then check every 5 minutes after. You are looking for golden brown around the edges and if you lift up the wax paper, you can see that it is getting brown underneath the granola. Because you will be using different types of nuts and they cook at different rates, each granola has its own cooking time. When you can smell it, it usually needs just 5 more minutes and then it's done. You want the nuts to release their oils and come together in flavor. I'm sorry for the lofty instruction here, but I have been making this granola for years and it is ALWAYS different in cooking time. Just set timer for 15 minutes and then check every 5. You'll get the hang of it, I promise.
- ✓ Once its brown on the bottom and on the edges, take the sheet pan and put it in the freezer for about 30 minutes. If its cold outside, then just put it outside for a half hour with a towel over it. This helps it to set up as granola bars.
- ✓ After it is cooled, lift the paper out and place on cutting board. Cut the granola into strips or squares.
- ✓ Put into air tight container and keep in fridge. If kept in fridge, will be good for 2 months. (you'll eat it before then though!)

Variations of granola that work well:

Use the same ratio for every granola variation- 6 cups of chopped nuts and seeds, 3 cups of dehydrated or dried fruit, 2 eggs, 2 tbs of sticky ingredient, 1-2 tbs additional flavors. It makes a lot, but it keeps for a long time in the fridge.

Apple pie:

- Cinnamon 1 tbs
- Dried apples
- Honey & Maple syrup (1 tbs of each)
- Walnuts
- Almonds
- Raisins or Craisins

Savory

- Almonds
- Walnuts
- Cashews
- Raisins
- Agave or Honey
- Cajun Spice 1 tbs
- Seasoned Salt over top instead of regular salt

Chocolate:

- Coco powder 1 -2 tbs
- Cashews
- Dry roasted peanuts
- Peanut butter and honey (1 tbs of each)
- Almonds
- Raisins
- Chocolate chips (optional)

Tropical

- Walnuts
- Cashews
- Almonds
- Agave
- Mango
- Cherries
- Pineapple