

Chocolate Chip Granola Bars

Makes about 30 bars

If you can't bear the thought of giving your kids chocolate chips first thing in the morning (my husband always gets tweaked when he sees our kids eating chocolate at 8 a.m.), you can easily replace them with naturally sweet dried fruit, such as cranberries, cherries, or raisins. Still, if my kids are going to have chocolate, I'd rather it be in the morning than right before they go to bed. Chewy and crunchy with toasted oats and a sweet surprise in every bite, these Chocolate Chip Granola Bars are a must for your lunch box rotation!

4 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
¼ cup whole-wheat flour
½ cup shredded unsweetened coconut
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup chocolate chips (or raisins or other dried fruit)
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ cup canola oil
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
½ cup honey

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Combine the oats, flour, coconut, brown sugar, chocolate chips, and salt in a large bowl.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together the canola oil, vanilla, and honey.
4. Pour the wet ingredients over the oat mixture and stir to combine.
5. Spread the granola mixture on the baking sheet and shape it into a 9 x 13-inch rectangle that's about 1 inch thick.
6. Bake for 40 minutes, or until golden and dry to the touch.
7. Cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes, then cut into 3 x 1-inch bars using a serrated knife. These bars will remain fresh for several weeks if wrapped individually in parchment or wax paper.

**recipe by Catherine McCord*