



Athletes Blueberry, Chocolate and Maple Granola Bars

(You'll never buy a pre-packaged granola bar again!)

3/4 cup old-fashioned rolled oats (not instant)
1/2 cup Dark Chocolate Chips
1/4 cup unsalted sunflower seeds
1/2 cup all-purpose flour (I use whole wheat)
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Pinch of nutmeg
1/2 cup canola oil
1/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1/4 cup pure maple syrup
1 large egg
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 cup dried blueberries

1. Preheat the oven to 350F degrees. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with heavy duty aluminum foil, making sure there is a 1-inch overhang all around the sides of the pan. These will be used as "handles" to remove the granola bars from the pan once they are baked. Set aside.
2. Spread the oats, and sunflower seeds on an ungreased baking sheet and bake until they are lightly toasted, stirring every 2 to 3 minutes. This should take about 10 minutes. Remove baking sheet from the oven and allow the mixture to cool completely before proceeding.
3. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt until well combined.
4. In a large mixing bowl combine the canola oil, brown sugar, and maple syrup until the mixture is smooth and well blended. Stir in the egg and vanilla extract. Stir in the flour mixture until it is just incorporated. Stir in the oat mixture until everything is well combined. Stir in the dried blueberries and chocolate chips.
5. Pour the batter into the prepared baking pan. Bake the granola bars until they are set, about 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely on a wire rack.
6. Lift the foil "handles" on either side of the pan to remove the slab of granola bars from the pan. Place them on a cutting board. Cut into desired size and shape bars.

Note: Chocolate chips may be omitted, other dried fruit may substitute for the blueberries (be creative!). Ensure you use pure maple syrup as this is the main flavour enhancer of the recipe. Double the vanilla content if you want a bolder flavour profile.

Most importantly, HAVE FUN. Cooking should not be work!

Chef Aurelio