

Chewy Granola Bars

Adapted from one I found on a Quaker Oats box years ago. This is very easy and good! The original recipe used sunflower seeds and coconut, which my family does not eat. Also, I changed the sweetener from brown sugar to honey to cut out the refined sugar.

1 cup honey

2/3 cup smooth peanut butter

2 2/3 cups rolled oats (the old fashioned kind work the best)

1 cup whole wheat flour

1 tsp cinnamon

1/2 tsp cloves

1/2 tsp nutmeg

1/3 cup wheat germ

2 cups of mix-ins in any combination of the following:

coconut, raisins, chocolate chips, butterscotch chips, peanut butter chips, unsalted peanuts (pref. NOT dry-roasted), miniature M&Ms, any finely chopped fruit such as dates, apricots, apples, etc.

Mix honey and peanut butter until well blended. It might help to warm the honey in the microwave about 20 seconds on "High" so that it is not so stiff. Stir in oats, flour wheat germ and mix-ins. If mixture seems too dry, add water 1 Tbsp at a time. If it is too sticky, add oats 1 Tbsp at a time. Mixture should not be so sticky that you can't spread it easily in a pan with greased fingers. Press into a 9x13 pan lightly greased. Bake at 350 until barely browned. Cut while warm into desired size bars. When completely cool, remove from pan with a greased spatula. Allow to "season" on a cutting board until they can be picked up easily without falling apart. Wrap each bar in a small sandwich bag or plastic wrap and store in a zip loc bag. These freeze well. You can adapt the mix-ins (chips, fruit, nuts) according to what your family can eat. If you have some fall apart, save them for ice cream topping. yum!

• CROCKPOT ENCHILADAS

Serving Size : 6

Amount Measure -- Ingredient -- Preparation Method

- 1 lb Hamburger**

- **1 Onion, chopped**
- **4 1/2 oz Can chopped chilies**
- **1 cn Mild enchilada sauce**
- **10 1/2 oz Golden mushroom soup**
- **10 1/2 oz Cheddar cheese soup**
- **10 1/2 oz Cream of mushroom soup**
- **10 1/2 oz Cream of celery soup**
- **1 pk Dorito chips**

Brown hamburger and chopped onion, pour off grease. Put all ingredients in crock pot except Doritos chips. Mix and cook low 4 to 6 hours. Last 15 minutes before you are ready to eat, add Dorito chips and stir.

We used to have 21 basic, simple, favorite meals. About 6 months ago, we cut this down to 14. We have now cut this to 9 basic meals that we cook in double or triple quantities. 3 bean recipes, 3 chicken recipes, 2 turkey recipes, 1 beef recipes. The variations come with the cooked veggies, salad, bread, rolls, muffins or biscuits and the fruit, or the way the entree is served. For instance turkey could be put in containers and served as turkey tetrazini, turkey & gravy, creamed turkey. We have several vegetarian meals each week that combine the beans or bean products like tofu, mock refried beans, bean burger stew (with small amount of meat or preferably Texturized Vegetable Protein (TVP) in combination with rice, pasta or grits. By taking the entree out of the freezer the night before and putting it in the refrigerator, it only takes a few minutes to cook rice, pasta, stuffing or any other grain from scratch, so in say 15-20 minutes the meal is ready, table set, side dishes prepared. Takes longer than this to go out and get a fast food meal at a burger joint. Teaching your child with coupons can start at an early age. Using the coupon inserts in your Sunday paper can be a great way to teach children the colors. It is also a good way to read to your children, and the time spent will show them the value that coupons can bring to their life.

As your child grows, you can let them take a more active role in using the coupons you collect together. Letting them in on helping to manage your coupon folder will show them the importance of time and money management. Go through and get rid of old coupons together, pointing to a calendar to let them learn about time and expiration. Show them that organization and thinking ahead of a purchase will help them save money. These savings can be applied throughout their life, so it's important to get them playing an active role in your coupon management.

Another thing that makes coupons so great in your child's education is it teaches them math and counting skills. You can point out dollars off, letting them subtract from the purchase price, and teach them how much value can come from something that's free. You can calculate percentages and add savings amounts. Another idea is to let them get an allowance from all the savings they find. This will not only help motivate them to find great deals, but it can help you save a lot of money at the same time.

We all know the Internet is playing an increasing role in everyone's lives. Did you know that coupons have found their way online? For most purchases, you can always find an online coupon or promotion code that can be applied at checkout. Make sure to show your children about this easy way to save money by simply spending a couple minutes to find a coupon. And, these types of savings are still free and are even easier to find! You can just search on any of the search engines like Google or Yahoo and find a huge range of coupons for any retailer. Not only will this teach your child about coupons, but also they'll be learning the value of using computers and the Internet to save them money.

We don't think about it much, but starting early to teach your children with coupons is very important. They will learn about the calendar, math, and saving money. These tools you teach them now will last throughout their life, so make sure to get an early start in coupon clipping with kids!