



Date Energy Bars with Vanilla, Orange Zest And Chocolate

Ingredients

5 1/2 ounces (by weight) pitted California Deglet Noor dates (about 20)
1/2 cup (3 ounces) raw almonds
1/2 cup (3 ounces) raw, shelled pistachios, plus extra for garnish
1/4 cup (1 ounce) raw pumpkin seeds
1/4 cup (1 ounce) sunflower seeds
2 tablespoons cacao nibs
1.5 tablespoons dried orange zest, plus extra for garnish
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons creamy almond butter

Chocolate glaze:

1 tablespoon coconut oil
4 ounces semi sweet chocolate chips
Flaky salt

Directions

- 1) Preheat oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a 5.5" x 10.5" loaf tin with parchment paper; allow a portion to hang over the sides.
- 2) Soak dates in boiling hot water for 10 to 15 minutes.
- 3) Meanwhile, roast nuts and seeds: lay out almonds, pistachios, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Roast for 20 minutes until aromatic. Remove from oven and allow to cool.
- 4) Pour nuts and seeds into food process, and pulse until coarsely chopped. Pour into a large bowl, add cacao nibs, and season with salt.
- 5) Now, strain the dates, but keep the water. Add dates to the food processor, along with 5 tablespoons of reserved hot water, orange zest, vanilla extract and almond butter.
- 6) Process for about 5 minutes, pausing machine to scrape down the sides of the bowl, until a smooth paste forms.
- 7) Pour paste into nut mixture and stir until well combined. Then, spoon into the prepared loaf tin. Press down with a spatula to compress the mixture, then use the bottom of a glass to press it down even further.
- 8) Bake for 35-45 minutes, until browned and somewhat firm to the touch.
- 9) Remove from the oven and press down again with a glass. If you have a matching loaf tin, pop it into the prepared tin, so that as the bars cool, they remain compressed.
- 10) Once bars have cooled to room temperature, melt coconut oil and chocolate chips in a small bowl set over a gently simmering saucepan of water. Stir until smooth then pour over the top of the baked bar mixture. Smooth with a spatula, then top with extra pistachios, a little extra dried orange zest, and some flaky salt. Refrigerate until the chocolate has set.
- 11) Slice into bars with a sharp knife that you've run through some hot water. Store the bars in an airtight container; you can keep them at room temperature but I prefer them cold!