



Chewy Fruit and Nut Bars

1 tsp. plus 2 Tbs. unsalted butter
1 1/2 cups (6 oz./185 g) puffed brown rice cereal
1 cup (4 oz./125 g) whole almonds
1/2 cup (3 oz./90 g) whole cashews
1 cup (4 oz./125 g) dried cranberries
1/2 cup (3 oz./90 g) chopped dried apricots
1/2 cup (5 oz./155 g) brown rice syrup
1/4 cup (2 1/2 oz./75 g) unsalted creamy almond butter
2 Tbs. firmly packed light brown sugar
1/4 tsp. salt

Line an 8-inch (20-cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving about 1 inch (2.5 cm) of overhang on 2 opposite edges to use later as a handle. Grease the foil with the 1 tsp. butter.

In a large bowl, stir together the brown rice cereal, almonds, cashews, cranberries and apricots. Set aside.

In a saucepan over medium heat, stir or whisk together the brown rice syrup, almond butter, brown sugar, the 2 Tbs. butter and the salt until the mixture is smooth. Bring to a simmer and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly to prevent scorching.

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Immediately pour the hot almond-butter mixture over the cereal mixture in the bowl. Using a wooden spoon, stir until the cereal, fruit and nuts are evenly coated and distributed.

With lightly buttered hands, press the mixture firmly and evenly into the prepared pan. Refrigerate until set, about 1 hour. Lift out of the pan and transfer to a cutting board. Use a sharp buttered knife to cut into 20 small bars and remove from the foil. Store the bars in the refrigerator in an airtight container, with sheets of waxed paper between the layers, for up to 1 week.

Makes 20 bars.

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