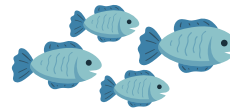


ALLERGY ALLIES



Do you or anyone you know have allergies? Sometimes it can be hard when the foods that we love make us sick or when other people enjoy delicious foods that we can't. Kids at school may become sick if they eat foods containing something they are allergic to. That's why many schools are nut free zones. It's important to listen respectfully if someone tells us they have an allergy or we're asked not to bring nuts to school!

There is an important distinction between allergies and intolerances. Allergies are immune mediated, meaning the immune system thinks the food is bad, produces antibodies and sets off the release of the chemical histamine which causes a reaction. With allergies we will usually see reactions on the skin and sometimes nausea, vomiting and difficulty breathing. Although uncomfortable, intolerances are often not as serious, and happen within the digestive system. Usually, people experience gastrointestinal symptoms but they may not happen every time the food is eaten. ¹

The most common allergens are: wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, fish, milk and soy! This granola bar recipe is a delicious option for lunchboxes - it can be made with gluten free oats, dairy free chocolate chips, (or raisins) and seed butter. You can make all or any of those changes depending on which allergies are of concern!

If you can, ask parents or children if they have any allergies before preparing food for group gatherings because some children may feel left out or become seriously ill if they eat something they are allergic to. There are a lot of alternatives available for the top allergens now and lots of delicious snacks that won't need any changes. Remember to watch out for cross contamination if you are making food at home. Some brands that offer allergy free snacks are 'made good' and 'enjoy life.'

Homemade Gluten Free Granola Bar Recipe

adapted from: <https://www.mamaknowsglutenfree.com/gluten-free-granola-bars/>

Ingredients

- seed butter
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup honey
- 2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups gluten-free quick oats
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup gluten-free mini chocolate chips (Could use dairy-free)

Instructions

- Line an 8-inch by an 8-inch baking pan with parchment paper.
- In a large bowl, stir together the peanut butter, honey, pure vanilla extract, cinnamon, and salt, until smooth.
- Add the gluten-free quick oats and mini chocolate chips. Stir until fully combined. The mixture will seem dry at first, but it'll come together.
- Press the mixture firmly into the pan with your hands or a spatula. Use the back of a $\frac{1}{4}$ measuring cup to help flatten the mixture. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 1 hour, then slice into bars.
- Store the cut bars in an air-tight container the refrigerator.



Oats are naturally gluten (wheat) free, but due to processing they are often cross contaminated. If you would like to make them gluten free, you can find oats that were processed specifically to ensure they remained gluten free!