



SEEDS & GOJI BERRY GRANOLA

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Let's talk granola, seeds and goji berries for a second, shall we? I know there are many recipes out there and it's no wonder why... it's pretty great and handy to have around. Have it as cold cereal, top it on hot oatmeal, non-dairy yogurts or non-dairy ice creams, or simply take some to-go in a small container...it's a great snack or meal that is filling, healthy and just plain good. It's so versatile too. You can pretty much add anything to your base and come out with something wonderful. That happens to be the case here. I have a ton of goji berries in my fridge along with pumpkin (pepitas) and sunflower seeds that needed to be put to good use. A few days ago I ran across this article from Wake Up World entitled, "Five Healthy Seed", which I had posted to the Facebook page. That planted the seed so to speak for this recipe. Seeds are great; especially for those who have nut allergies...they can be a nice alternative. Some of the best seeds in whole form are hemp, sunflower, chia, sesame and pumpkin seeds. Flax seeds are great too but unless they are ground you're not going to get their full benefits as they will pass straight through the body without much notice. As for the goji berries, well I love them because they don't have any added sweeteners like most dried fruits do (I also like raisins for this reason). They are full of anti-oxidants just as other berries like blueberries, acai berries, cranberries, strawberries and cherries.

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups old fashioned rolled oats (I used GF)*
- 1/3 cup sunflower seeds*
- 1/3 cup pumpkin seeds (pepitas)*
- 1/3 cup goji berries*
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds*
- 2 tablespoons hemp hearts or the entire seed*
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon*
- pinch of salt
- 1/2 - 3/4 cup pure maple syrup*
- 1/4 cup sunflower seed butter (sunbutter), optional*
- 1 teaspoon vanilla*

Preheat oven to 250 degrees.

Combine all your dry ingredients in a medium size bowl. Add your maple syrup, sunbutter and vanilla. Mix until well coated.

On a greased (I used coconut oil), or ungreased, baking sheet (use two sheets if you like), add your granola, laying it flat and bake for about 30- 35 minutes, stirring the mixture every 10 minutes to ensure even cooking. If using two baking sheets, you may even like to switch their positions in the oven once after stirring. If using a smaller baking dish such as a 9x9 or 11x13, bake for up to 1 hour or so, or until golden throughout. Be sure to stir the mixture every 15 minutes or so. Once done, remove from oven and let cool completely before storing in an air tight container of choice. Will keep up to one month.

Notes: The more syrup you use the more likely you are to create larger granola chunks throughout. I only used 1/2 cup in mine and felt it was a nice texture with many clumps. It also was a perfect sweetness for my liking, not too sweet. Add additional syrup to your preferences. Feel free to add 1/4 cup or so unsweetened shredded coconut to the dry mixture as well.

*available at Molbeck's

<http://www.simple-veganista.com/2013/03/seed-goji-berry-granola.html>