Homemade Two Ingredient Healthy Fruit and Nut Bars

You can improve your blood lipid level, lose fat, improve gut health, and increase your energy levels with one snack that you can easily make at home. All you need is two ingredients – nuts and dates.

But Aren’t Dates Full of Sugar?

Just one pitted Medjool date contains around 16 grams of sugar, which means that three dates have more sugar than a 12 ounce can of coca cola. Shouldn’t dates be vilified? Hide your kids, this vengeful plant will steal their health!

Let’s See What The Science Says

When healthy subjects consumed 100 grams a day of Hallawi dates or Medjool dates for four weeks, their cholesterol levels and BMI stayed the same, and their triglyceride levels decreased. This is a phenomenon that has never been found to be the case in studies done on the effects of sugar-sweetened beverages like soda on our health.

In fact, people who consume sugar-sweetened beverages regularly tend to have unhealthy cholesterol levels, higher triglyceride levels, more body fat, and high blood sugar. This is why people who are at a high risk for diseases like diabetes are strongly advised to stop consuming sugary beverages. But what about dates?

A High Sugar Food That May be Good

for Diabetics

Even in people with type 2 diabetes, a disease that is characterized by a lack of blood sugar control, the consumption of dates does not cause significant changes in blood glucose levels. This indicates that dates may be a good sugar replacement for diabetics as well as healthy individuals. This finding seems like an anomaly that goes against everything we know about nutrition, at least until we dig deeper into the other components of dates.

“The Best Food for the Future”

In an article published in the International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition, the researchers concluded that “dates may be considered as an almost ideal food.” This is because they contain a high percentage of fiber, fifteen minerals, at least six vitamins, 23 amino acids, and a high antioxidant content. Together, these components help your body use the sugar that is in the dates so efficiently and effectively that when we eat them in small amounts, it only leads to positive health effects.

That’s Nuts!

Yes, it is nuts, especially when you add nuts to the dates. In a study done on overweight adults, one group ate two dried fruit and nut bars that consisted of 340 extra calories, while the other group ate their normal diet. After 8 weeks their weight, waist circumference, blood pressure, and blood lipids were remeasured.

What we’d commonly expect after 8 weeks of eating 340 extra calories per day is a weight gain of at least 5 pounds (and that’s with some modest math). However, the actual results will surprise you. After eight weeks of consuming 340 extra calories from two fruit and nut bars, the study participants

had no significant change in weight, waist circumference, blood pressure, or blood lipids.

Even nut consumption alone is associated with a lower waist circumference, lower rate of obesity, decreased blood pressure, and healthier blood sugar and blood lipid levels, which makes them a healthy snack as well. This is because they contain vitamins, minerals, health-promoting fats, and antioxidants that make them highly satiating and even more healthy.

Whatever They Can Do You Can Do Better

Before you run to the store to get some fruit and nut bars or trail mix, it is important to know that many of them have added sugars and oils that can leach positive health benefits from the food.

One of the best fruit and nut bars that I could find is made by a company called LÄRABAR. However, these date and nut bars are much more expensive than if you made your own snacks at home with organic, high-quality ingredients.

And yes, making your own date and nut snacks with organic, high-quality dates and nuts will still be cheaper than buying a box of LÄRABARs that are produced with lower quality and non-organic ingredients by General Mills.

How To Make Your Own 2-Ingredient Super Snack

Just by blending your favorite nuts together with pitted dates, you can create a snack that will indulge your sweet tooth like a dessert and satiate you like a fatty meal, while still being healthier than a store bought “healthy” snack. It

will only take you less than a half hour, and after you take your first bite you will be wondering why you've never made these before.

Step 1

Start with the ratio of 1 and 1/2 cups of your favorite nuts to 1 packed cup of pitted dates to make whatever amount of date and nut snacks that you would like.

Soak the dates that you are going to use in hot water for 5 to 15 minutes or until they are soft. If the dates are already soft, they may not need to be soaked.

Tip: Save the water that you use to soak your dates and use it to sweeten up your tea or smoothie. It may also contain some vitamin c and b-vitamins as well.

Health Bonus: Use Halawi dates rather than Medjool. Studies have found Halawi dates to have even more health benefits than Medjool dates (and they still taste delicious).

Step 2

Drain and save the date water for later use. Put the dates and nuts in the blender and blend them until the nuts are to your desired particle size and consistency. The mixture should be sticky.

Health Bonus: Use raw organic nuts that are soaked for at least 7 hours. The soaking process will help increase nutrient bioavailability and enhance digestion. Just make sure you dehydrate your nuts (at temperatures lower than 150 degrees Fahrenheit) so that they last longer and don't mess with the consistency of your date and nut mixture.

Step 3

Take the date and nut mixture and form it into whatever shape

you’d like.

You can roll them into little energy balls like these:



Or flatten the mixture into a tray or pan and cut them into bars.

Tip: If you store them in the fridge they will be fresh for 6 months or longer. If you freeze them they will last for about a year.

Health and Flavor Bonus: Cover your date and nut snacks with dried shredded coconut and/or cinnamon. The shredded coconut will add so more healthy fat and fiber with a coconutty taste, and the cinnamon will add some health promoting antioxidants.

Take Them to The Next Level with This Chocolate Snack Hack

If you love chocolate, but just can’t find a healthy way to add it to your diet this snack hack is for you.

Step 1

Put half of a cup of coconut oil in a pan and melt it at low heat.

Step 2

Once the coconut oil is completely liquified stir a half cup of cacao powder into the melted oil until it is a homogenous chocolatey liquid.

Health and Flavor Bonus: Add a quarter of a teaspoon of organic ground vanilla powder to the mixture to enhance the flavor and experience the many health benefits of vanilla.

Step 3

Remove the mixture from heat and cover your date and nut snacks with the chocolate. Sprinkle cinnamon and/or dried shredded coconut on top for a health and flavor bonus.

Put them in the refrigerator to let them cool and harden. In about an hours you will have a delicious solid chocolate covering over your homemade date and nut snacks.

Before You Indulge

Moderation is and always will be a key principle in maintaining your health, and it applies just as much to healthy food as it does to unhealthy food. Just as you can overdo it on sugary beverages and refined foods and destroy your body, you can do the same with these delicious date and nut snacks.

However, dates and nuts are very satiating foods so you will feel much fuller than usual after eating them. Only two to four of these small snacks will do the trick. Enjoy!

Recommended Reading:

- *Healthy Sugar Alternatives and More*
- *How To Make Natural Body Butters That Actually Moisturize Your Skin*
- *You Need Sulforaphane – How and Why to Grow Broccoli*

Sprouts
- *Pulses – Beans, Peas, Lentils, Chickpeas – How to Soak, Recipes, and More*

Sources:

- *Intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and weight gain: a systematic review* – The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition
- *Effects of date (Phoenix dactylifera L., Medjool or Hallawi Variety) consumption by healthy subjects on serum glucose and lipid levels and on serum oxidative status: a pilot study.* – NCBI
- *Glycemic indices of five varieties of dates in healthy and diabetic subjects* – NCBI
- *Dates, medjool* – Self Nutrition Data
- *The fruit of the date palm: its possible use as the best food for the future?* – NCBI
- *The effect of the addition of daily fruit and nut bars to diet on weight, and cardiac risk profile, in overweight adults.* – NCBI
- *Nut consumption is associated with decreased health risk factors for cardiovascular disease and metabolic syndrome in U.S. adults: NHANES 1999-2004.* – NCBI