

Burnt Almond Fruit & Nut Balls

Swick

Makes 30 balls | Active Time: 30 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour

- 1 1/2 cups oats
- 1 cup shredded unsweetened coconut
- 3/4 cup peanut butter (unsalted, no sugar)
- 1/3 cup Medjool dates (approx. 5), pitted
- 1 tsp gr cinnamon
- 1/2 cup almonds, roasted and roughly chopped*
- 1/2 cup Thompson raisins
- 1/2 cup bittersweet chocolate chips
- 1 tsp fleur de sel*
- 5 tbsp refined coconut oil
- 4 tbsp liquid sweetener*

To start, add the oats, shredded coconut, peanut butter, dates, and cinnamon, to a food processor and pulse the mixture until you reach a somewhat coarse sand-like texture.

Note that other nut butters can be used instead of peanut butter. With that said, other nut butters might affect the final consistency, so you may need to adjust the amount of coconut oil accordingly. For the salt, we like to use fleur de sel as it provides a nice pop of salt without being too salty and overpowering.

At this point, remove the mixture from the food processor and set aside. Next, add the chopped almonds, raisins, and chocolate chips to the food processor and pulse a few times to break them up just a bit. Note: For the almonds, roast them in a 325°F (160°C) oven for 10 to 15 minutes, or until nicely roasted.

Next, add the oat mixture back to the food processor and add the salt. We like to add the salt at this stage as it gives it more of a pop. If added too soon it will breakdown further and will give the balls more of a subtle overall saltiness. Next, pulse the mixture a few times just to combine all of the ingredients together.

Next, add the coconut oil and sweetener and pulse a few times to bring everything together. For the oil, we like to use REFINED coconut oil as it doesn't give the balls a strong coconut flavor but feel free to experiment with unrefined coconut oil to see what you prefer. For the sweetener, we typically use maple syrup however agave, brown rice syrup or even a low-glycemic liquid sweetener such as monk fruit sweetener would also work.

When done, the mixture should sort of hold together when squeezed in your hand. The mixture/balls will hold together better once chilled but they should still seem like they are mostly holding together at this stage.

Lastly, taste the mixture. Does it have the right amount of salt or cinnamon for you? If not, add a touch more.

- 1 cup shredded unsweetened coconut, optional
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder, optional

To portion the balls, use a spoon or your hands to portion the mixture into bite-sized balls. Squeeze the dough slightly to bring the mixture together.

Once you are done portioning the balls, roll them in the palm of your hand — and squeeze them together even more — to form a nice smooth ball.

At this point, you can either leave the balls as is — which is how we prefer them — or you can roll them in shredded coconut or cocoa powder.

To coat them in coconut, place the shredded coconut into a bowl and begin to roll the balls in the coconut. You may find it helpful to scoop some coconut into the palm of your hand and then place a ball into the coconut and then squeeze and roll the ball in coconut as you turn the ball around using your other hand.

To coat them in cocoa powder, you will likely need to roll them twice as the oil from the balls will soak up the first layer of cocoa powder. To do this, simply roll the balls in cocoa powder and then refrigerate for 15 minutes or so. Once the balls have hardened, roll the balls a second time in cocoa powder.

Once you are done rolling the balls, place them into the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes to firm up.