

Matcha Crispy Rice Bars



Think of these not-too-sweet bars as a more grown-up version of a rice krispie treat. [Matcha](#), a type of green tea that comes ground into a powder, adds a small caffeine kick while providing a good dose of brain-boosting catechins, like EGCG. The combination of nut butter, seeds, and extra-virgin olive oil give these bars a brain-friendly fat profile—mostly monounsaturated fats—that’s both delicious and satiating.

Here are a few tips for cooking with matcha: 1. Use a fine mesh sieve to keep the green tea powder from clumping. 2. Avoid applying heat to ceremonial grade matcha as it may inactivate brain-healthy catechins. For these no-bake bars, you’ll fold in the matcha after toasting the other ingredients in the oven. 3. It’s fine to use either culinary matcha or ceremonial grade (which is usually more expensive) when cooking. I reserve my freshest, highest quality ceremonial matcha for drinking, but will cook with it if it’s a few months old (and thus coming to the end of its polyphenol potency).

Makes 25 bars

1 cup rolled oats

½ cup raw, hulled pumpkin seeds (aka pepitas)

¼ cup unhulled white sesame seeds

1 cup unsweetened almond, cashew, sunflower, or peanut butter (well-stirred)

¼ cup maple syrup

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 cup crisped brown rice cereal (I use Nature’s Path Organic Rice Puffs)

2 tablespoons ceremonial or culinary grade matcha (I like the flavor of MUD/WTR rise:matcha for these; it has a hint of cardamom and cinnamon)

½ teaspoon kosher salt

1 tablespoon black sesame seeds (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Combine the oats, pumpkin seeds, and sesame seeds on the baking sheet in an even layer. Bake until a shade darker and fragrant, 10 to 14 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl stir together the almond butter, maple syrup, and oil. (If it is difficult to stir, place the mixture on top of the oven to warm or microwave for 10

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seconds before combining.) When the oats, pumpkin seeds, and sesame seeds are done, transfer them to the bowl using the parchment paper. Add the cereal, matcha, and salt and combine with a rubber spatula until all the ingredients are evenly coated with matcha.

Use the parchment paper from the baking sheet to line an 8x8-inch baking pan so that 2 sides overhang, trimming if needed. Scrape the mixture into the pan, sprinkle with black sesame seeds (if using), and press firmly into an even layer. It helps to use the flat bottom of a measuring cup or a metal spatula to really compact the bars into the pan. Refrigerate for at least one hour. Use the parchment to lift from the pan and cut into 25 (1½-inch) bars. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to one week.