

## **DARK CHOCOLATE GRANOLA WITH CACAO NIBS** **BRAIN HEALTH KITCHEN by Annie Fenn, M.D.**

### **Dark Chocolate Granola with Cacao Nibs**



Here's a granola for grown-ups who love chocolate! It's not too sweet, packs in 3 types of chocolate providing brain-healthy cocoa flavanols.

For the highest quality chocolate, look for a natural (not "dutch") cocoa powder and dark chocolate with more than 65% cacao. Cacao nibs vary tremendously in price and quality. Look for a natural brand from a store with high turnover; stale nibs can be very dry and crunchy. (I source my cacao powder and nibs from Thrive Market, an organic online grocery store.)

Makes 6 cups

#### **Ingredients:**

5 cups old-fashioned rolled oats  
1 cup sliced almonds  
2 tablespoons natural cacao powder  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon ground cardamom  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup pure maple syrup  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 tsp almond extract  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 tsp coarse salt  
1 ounce dark chocolate 70% cacao content or greater  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cacao nibs  
Maldon sea salt to taste, optional  
Blueberries and yogurt, for serving

#### **Instructions:**

Preheat the oven to 350°F and place the rack in the center of the oven. Line a rimmed (18 x 13-inch) baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicon mat.

In a large bowl, combine oats, sliced almonds, cacao powder, cinnamon, cardamom, and salt.

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In a large (4-cup) measuring cup, combine maple syrup, olive oil, almond extract, and vanilla extract using a fork or a whisk.

Pour olive oil mixture over the oats and stir to combine. Using a rubber spatula, spread evenly over the baking sheet.

Bake for 20 minutes. Rotate the baking sheet front to back. Bake for another 20 minutes. Pull the pan from the oven and carefully inspect the granola. If it is golden brown throughout and darker brown on the edges, it is done. If not, return to the oven and check it again in 3 minutes. Keep checking until the granola is golden brown but not burning at the edges.

Remove from the oven and cool in the pan. Transfer to a large bowl. When the granola is no longer warm, grate the dark chocolate over the bowl using the large holes of a box grater. Stir to evenly distribute the chocolate shards. Add the cacao nibs and stir again.

Taste the granola. You may want to add a little more salt to balance the chocolate and bring out its flavor. I like to add a sprinkle of flaky Maldon sea salt. If not, scoop the granola into an airtight container (I like to use tall Mason jars) and store in a cool place away from sunlight.

Enjoy in small portions (about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) as a snack, or sprinkled on berries and yogurt.