



Recipes for Homemade Gifts

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Mississippi Spiced Pecans

Makes: 4 cups

Active time: 20 minutes

Total: 20 minutes

To make ahead: Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

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Make plenty of these mildly sweet and salty nuts—they are great to have on hand over the holidays.

- 1 pound pecan halves**
- 1 tablespoon packed dark brown sugar**
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary**
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper**
- ½ teaspoon piment d'Espelette (see Tip) or a pinch of cayenne pepper**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.

2. Spread pecans on a large baking sheet. Roast until fragrant, about 12 minutes. Watch carefully so they don't burn.

3. Combine brown sugar, salt, thyme, rosemary, pepper and piment d'Espelette (or cayenne) in a small bowl. Transfer the roasted pecans to a large bowl, drizzle with oil and toss well to coat completely. Sprinkle with the spice mixture and toss again. Serve warm or let cool completely and store in an airtight container.

Per 2-tablespoon serving: 107 calories; 11 g fat (1 g sat, 6 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 2 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 1 g protein; 1 g fiber; 53 mg sodium; 58 mg potassium.

Carbohydrate servings: 0

Exchanges: 2 fat

Tip: Piment d'Espelette is a sweet, mildly spicy chile pepper from the Basque region of France, ground into a powder. Find it online at spanishtable.com.



Blueberry-Pecan Pancake Mix

Makes: 2½ cups dry mix, for 16 (3-inch) pancakes; 8 servings, 2 pancakes each.

Active time: 10 minutes

Total: 10 minutes

To make ahead: The mixture of dry ingredients can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 month or freeze for up to 3 months.

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Say goodbye to frozen pancakes or box mixes: dried blueberries give this pancake mix rich blueberry flavor and the pecans liven up the texture with a bit of crunch.

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup whole-wheat flour
- ½ cup dried blueberries
- ½ cup finely chopped pecans, toasted (see Tip)
- 3 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt

To make dry mix:

Whisk all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, blueberries, pecans, brown sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt in a medium bowl.

To make pancakes:

Whisk 2 large eggs, 2 large egg whites, 1½ cups nonfat buttermilk and 2 tablespoons canola oil in a medium bowl. Put Blueberry-Pecan Pancake Mix in a large bowl. Make a well in the center of the mix; add wet ingredients and stir until just combined. Use about ¼ cup batter for each pancake.

Per serving: 259 calories; 10 g fat (1 g sat, 6 g mono); 54 mg cholesterol; 35 g carbohydrate; 8 g protein; 3 g fiber; 356 mg sodium; 109 mg potassium.

Carbohydrate servings: 2

Exchanges: 2 starch, 2 fat

Tip: Place chopped pecans in a small dry skillet and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until fragrant and lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes.



Maple-Nut Granola

Makes: 10 cups.

Active time: 10 minutes

Total: 1 hour 40 minutes

To make ahead: Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

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We love the maple-nut flavor combination of this heart-healthy granola, but feel free to substitute your favorite nuts or dried fruit for your own custom blend.

- 5 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut chips (see **Tip**) or flakes
- ½ cup sliced almonds
- ½ cup coarsely chopped pecans
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- ⅓ cup unsalted pumpkin seeds
- ⅓ cup unsalted sunflower seeds
- ½ cup pure maple syrup
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup canola oil
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup raisins

1. Preheat oven to 275°F.

2. Combine oats, coconut, almonds, pecans, brown sugar, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds in a large bowl. Combine syrup, water and oil in a medium bowl or large measuring cup and pour over the oat mixture; stir until well combined. Spread the mixture into a large (12-by-15-inch) roasting pan or large rimmed baking sheet.

3. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove from the oven, stir, and continue baking until golden brown and beginning to crisp, about 45 minutes more. Stir in cranberries and raisins. Let cool completely before storing.

Per ½-cup serving: 255 calories; 12 g fat (3 g sat, 4 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 32 g carbohydrate; 12 g added sugars; 6 g protein; 4 g fiber; 15 mg sodium; 92 mg potassium.

Carbohydrate Servings: 2

Exchanges: 1 starch, 1 other carbohydrate, 2 fat

Tip: Large thin flakes of dried coconut called coconut chips make attractive garnishes. Find them in the produce section of large supermarkets or at melissas.com.

HOLIDAYS!

Granola

204. 1 hour 40 minutes |
Airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

Preheat oven to 275°F. Combine 5 cups old-fashioned rolled oats, 1 cup unsweetened coconut chips, ½ cup sliced almonds, ½ cup coarsely chopped pecans, ½ cup unsalted pumpkin seeds and ⅓ cup unsalted sunflower seeds in a large bowl. Combine ½ cup pure maple syrup, ½ cup water and ¼ cup canola oil in a medium bowl and pour over the oat mixture; stir until well combined. Spread the mixture in a 12-by-15-inch roasting pan or large rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove from the oven, stir, and continue baking until golden brown and beginning to crisp, about 45 minutes more. Stir in ½ cup dried cranberries and ½ cup raisins. Let cool completely before storing.



Almond Cherry Bites

Makes: 15 cookies

Active time: 30 minutes

Total: 1 hour

To make ahead: Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days or freeze without the chocolate drizzle (Step 6) for up to 3 months. Defrost at room temperature before drizzling with chocolate.

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Dried cherries, ground almonds and a drizzle of chocolate make these cookies festive for the holidays.

- 1/3 cup whole almonds
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup coarsely chopped dried cherries
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 large egg white
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
- 2 tablespoons chocolate chips or finely chopped dark and/or white chocolate, for decoration (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Grind almonds and sugar in a food processor to desired texture: a coarser texture will give you small almond pieces in the cookie; a fine grind will give great almond flavor without any crunch from the almonds. (Be careful to not overgrind: you will get almond paste.) Transfer the mixture to a large bowl. Add cherries and flour; mix to combine.
3. Add oil, egg white and vanilla and almond

extracts; mix with a wooden spoon until well incorporated.

4. Shape the dough into walnut-size balls with your hands or a small cookie scoop (about 1 rounded tablespoon each) and place 1½ inches apart on a large, ungreased baking sheet.

5. Bake until the bottoms are golden (the top will stay white), 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

6. Melt chocolate (see *Tips*) and drizzle or pipe onto each cooled cookie, if desired. Let stand until the chocolate sets.

Per cookie: 101 calories; 4 g fat (1 g sat, 2 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 15 g carbohydrate; 2 g protein; 1 g fiber; 4 mg sodium; 15 mg potassium.

Carbohydrate servings: 1

Exchanges: 1 other carbohydrate, 1 fat

Tips:

To melt chocolate, place chocolate in a bowl and microwave on Medium for 45 seconds. Stir; continue microwaving on Medium in 20-second intervals until almost melted, stirring after each interval. Continue stirring until completely melted. Or place in the top of a double boiler over hot, but not boiling, water. Stir until melted.

To decorate cookies with melted chocolate, use a pastry bag fitted with a fine writing tip to pipe the melted chocolate or dip tines of a fork in chocolate and drizzle. You can improvise a pastry bag with a small plastic bag. Add melted chocolate to the bag, cut a tiny hole in one corner and squeeze the chocolate out.



Fig-Anise Compote

Makes: about 6 cups

Active time: 20 minutes

Total: 2 hours 20 minutes

To make ahead: Refrigerate in airtight containers for up to 3 weeks.

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Cook the figs in this compote down until they can be spread with a knife or spoon. The compote is equally delicious as a condiment on a cheese plate, as an accompaniment for roast pork or as a spread on toast. If you're giving this as a gift, include a card with serving suggestions.

- 1** tablespoon canola oil or extra-virgin olive oil
- 1** large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1/4** teaspoon salt
- 1 3/4** pounds dried Mission figs, trimmed and chopped
- 6** cups water

1/2 cup honey or lightly packed brown sugar

4 teaspoons aniseed or 3 whole star anise

- 1.** Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion and salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until starting to brown, about 5 minutes. Add figs, water, honey (or brown sugar) and aniseed (or star anise). Bring to a simmer and cook, adjusting the heat as necessary to maintain a simmer, until the figs are starting to fall apart, 2 to 2 1/4 hours.
- 2.** Let cool. Remove star anise, if using, and spoon the compote into airtight containers; refrigerate.

Per 2-tablespoon serving: 56 calories; 0 g fat (0 g sat, 0 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 14 g carbohydrate; 3 g added sugars; 1 g protein; 2 g fiber; 15 mg sodium; 122 mg potassium.

Carbohydrate servings: 1

Exchanges: 1 fruit



Southwestern Three-Bean & Barley Soup Mix

Makes: Enough dry soup mix for 8 cups soup

Active time: 10 minutes

Total: 10 minutes

To make ahead: Store in an airtight container for up to 1 month.

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Making your own dry soup mix from beans and spices couldn't be easier. Layered in a jar, it makes a very pretty gift.

- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ⅓ cup dried black beans
- ½ cup pearl barley
- ⅓ cup dried kidney beans
- ⅓ cup dried great northern beans

1. Layer chili powder, cumin, oregano, black beans, barley, kidney beans and great northern beans in a clean, dry 2-cup jar or bag.
2. To turn the soup mix into a pot of soup: Heat 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil in a Dutch

oven over medium heat. Add 1 diced large onion, 1 diced celery stalk and 1 diced carrot; cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add 9 cups water, 4 cups broth and the soup mix. Bring to a lively simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to maintain a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the beans are tender, 1¾ to 2½ hours (adding more water, ½ cup at a time, if necessary or desired). Season with ¾ teaspoon salt, or to taste.

Per serving: 205 calories; 3 g fat (1 g sat, 2 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 35 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 11 g protein; 10 g fiber; 705 mg sodium; 601 mg potassium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin A (49% daily value), Magnesium & Potassium (17% dv), Iron (16% dv).

Carbohydrate servings: 1½

Exchanges: 2 starch, 1 vegetable, 1 lean meat, ½ fat

Slow-Cooker Variation: Use 2 cups water (instead of 9 cups) and combine all ingredients in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook until the beans are tender, about 4 hours on High or 7 to 8 hours on Low.



Shallot, Tarragon & Lemon Vinegar

Makes: 6 cups

Active time: 40 minutes

Total: 3-4 weeks

To make ahead: Refrigerate the vinegar for up to 1 year.

Equipment: 3 pint-size (2-cup) glass canning jars; cheesecloth

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Stir a little of this shallot-, tarragon- and lemon-infused vinegar and some fresh chopped tarragon into reduced-fat cream cheese and try it as a spread for crackers. Top with a piece of smoked salmon for an instant appetizer. Or combine the vinegar with a little olive oil, low-fat mayonnaise and chopped celery and use as a dressing for tuna salad. The recipe makes enough vinegar so you'll have enough extra to decant into a decorative bottle or two to give away as a simple homemade gift.

6 cups cider vinegar

3 shallots, peeled and quartered

6 strips of zest from 2 lemons (see *Tip*)

12 sprigs fresh tarragon

Additional fresh herbs for decoration (optional)

1. Wash 3 pint-size (2-cup) heatproof glass canning jars (or similar containers) and their lids with hot soapy water. Rinse well with hot water. Fill a large, deep pot (such as a water bath canner) about half full with water. Place the jars upright into the pot; add enough

additional water to cover by 2 inches. Bring the water to a boil; boil jars for 10 minutes. Add the lids to the pot, and then remove the pot from the heat. Let the jars and lids stay in the hot water as you prepare the flavoring and vinegar. (Keeping the jars warm minimizes breakage when filling with hot liquid.)

2. Thoroughly rinse herbs and zest with water and pat dry with a clean towel. Remove the jars from the water bath with a jar lifter or tongs. Divide shallots, zest and tarragon among the jars. Heat vinegar in a large saucepan to a bare simmer (at least 190°F). Carefully divide the vinegar among the prepared jars, leaving at least ¼-inch of space between the top of the jar and the vinegar. Remove lids from the water bath, dry with a clean towel and screw tightly onto the jars.

3. Store the jars in a cool, dark place, undisturbed, for 3 to 4 weeks. Strain vinegar through cheesecloth into another container. Repeat as needed until all the sediment is removed and the vinegar is clear. Discard all solids and pour the strained vinegar back into rinsed jars or divide among sterilized decorative bottles. Decorate with a few well-rinsed fresh sprigs of tarragon, strips of zest and/or quartered shallots, if desired.

Per tablespoon: 3 calories; 0 g fat (0 g sat, 0 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 0 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 0 g protein; 0 g fiber; 0 mg sodium; 0 mg potassium.

Tip: To remove citrus zest, use a vegetable peeler to remove strips of the outer skin (zest), leaving the bitter white pith behind.



Peppermint Mocha Chocolate Bark

Makes: 3 dozen 1½-inch pieces

Active time: 15 minutes

Total: 45 minutes

To make ahead: Refrigerate airtight for up to 2 weeks.

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With just a few simple steps, you can transform plain chocolate into a divine treat with this chocolate bark recipe. We stir chopped peppermint candies and chocolate-covered espresso beans into this chocolate bark, which is perfect for a gift.

- 2 cups chopped bittersweet or semisweet chocolate (or chips)**
- 30 peppermint candies, coarsely chopped**
- ¼ cup chocolate-covered espresso beans, coarsely chopped**

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil. (Take care to avoid wrinkles.)
 2. Place chocolate in a medium microwave-safe bowl; microwave on Medium for 1 minute. Stir, then continue microwaving on Medium, stirring every 20 seconds, until melted. (*Alternatively, place in the top of a double boiler over hot, but not boiling, water. Stir until melted.*)
 3. Combine candy and espresso beans in a small bowl. Stir half of the mixture into the melted chocolate. Scrape the chocolate onto the foil and spread it into a 9-inch square. Sprinkle with the remaining candy mixture, pressing any large bits in. Refrigerate until set, about 30 minutes.
 4. Transfer the bark and foil to a cutting board. Use a sharp knife to cut into 1½-inch pieces.
- Per piece:** 60 calories; 3 g fat (2 g sat, 0 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 10 g carbohydrate; 6 g added sugars; 0 g protein; 1 g fiber; 0 mg sodium; 0 mg potassium.
- Carbohydrate servings:** ½
- Exchanges:** ½ other carbohydrate, ½ fat

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About EatingWell health tags

A recipe checked...

- Heart Health** has limited saturated fat.
- Diabetes** is low in calories and meets limits for Carbohydrate Servings.
- Weight Loss** has reduced calories (and limited saturated fat).
- Gluten Free** does not contain wheat, rye, barley or oats.
(Many processed foods, such as broths, soy sauce and other condiments, may contain hidden sources of gluten. If a recipe calls for a packaged [e.g., canned] ingredient, we recommend that you carefully read the label to make sure you pick a brand that does not contain a hidden source of gluten. Also, please note that while a recipe may be marked "Gluten Free," the serving suggestions that accompany it may contain gluten.)

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