

Coconut-Chocolate-Cherry Granola Bar

By Anne Banas, [SmarterTravel](#)



Why It's Great for Travel: Store-bought granola bars tend to be more like candy bars than health food, so it pays to be able to hand-pick your ingredients. In my from-scratch recipe, I've used mainly brown-rice syrup—which is relatively low on the glycemic index—as a sweetener instead of corn syrup. I've also added flaxseed and wheat germ for additional nutritional benefit. And since it's nut-free, it's extra plane friendly. The best part about these bars is that no actual baking is required—perfect for time-pressed travelers.

Yield: 15 to 18 bars

1 cup dried cherries
1 cup hot water
1 cup crispy brown-rice cereal
2 cups rolled oats
1 cup shredded coconut, preferably unsweetened
2 tablespoons flaxseed, ground
6 tablespoons wheat germ
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup brown-rice syrup
¼ cup light-brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ cup mini dark-chocolate chips

1. Line bottom of a 9 x 13-inch baking pan with parchment paper.
2. Place dried cherries in a small bowl and pour hot water over them. Let sit for 15 minutes. Drain cherries, then roughly chop and set aside.
3. In a large bowl, mix rice cereal, oats, shredded coconut, ground flaxseed, wheat germ, and salt; set aside.

4. In a small saucepan, combine brown-rice syrup and brown sugar. Bring to a boil (do not allow mixture to smoke). Take off heat and add vanilla. Fold into dry mixture, being very careful since syrup will be extremely hot. Cool slightly, then fold in cherries and chocolate chips.
5. Press mixture evenly into prepared baking pan. Allow to cool in the refrigerator for at least two hours, then cut into bars while still cold.

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