

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

ON-THE-GO INSTANT OATMEAL

Time is something most people think they do not have enough of. Our lives are busy. It is no wonder there are lists upon lists of easy ways or products to help make your life easier. Meal planning and preparation is one of those things that can help save you time and energy.

In thinking about meal preparation, many might immediately go to prepping lunches and dinners for the weekday. Meal prep for breakfast might just extend to having the right ingredients or cereal and milk ready to make the next morning. Which may not be as helpful as it could be if you are running late in the morning.

Keeping some nutritious, pantry staple ingredients on hand can help ensure that breakfast is achievable in a limited amount of time but that it is also nutritious. Studies have shown that eating breakfast helps children be more alert and concentrate better in school. It also combats feeling tired and irritable and assists with preventing obesity in both children and adults. In fact, skipping breakfast is more likely to cause weight gain than prevent it. Another great reason to keep these pantry staples.

This meal uses oats and walnuts that are good sources of fiber and uses dried fruit to sweeten the dish so there is no need for additional sugar. Oats are high in the soluble fiber beta-glucan, which has numerous benefits. It helps reduce cholesterol and blood sugar levels, promotes healthy gut bacteria, and increases feelings of being full. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that at least half of all the grains you eat are whole grains, which is around 3 to 5 servings each day.

This week, give this dish a try and play with the flavors you like. Instead of dried fruit, use a banana or other fresh fruit. Add this ingredient just before microwaving as it will not keep if stored with the recipe as made. The challenge on this meal is to sweeten it or make it savory without adding refined sugar.

DIETITIAN TIP

Aim to limit the amount of "added sugar" when building a healthy eating pattern to less than 50 grams per day. Check out the Nutrition Facts Information on packaging and look for "added sugars", which is different than total carbohydrates. Added sugars add no nutritional value to the diet and are considered "empty calories". Use our Dietitian Approved Tag at the shelf to guide you, as we have done the work for you.



MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Protein 10 g | Fat 6 g | Carbs 42 g

% CALORIES OF MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Calories 244 | Protein 15 % | Fat 21 % | Carbs 64 %

NUTRIENT / SERVING SIZE:

Fiber 6 g | Sodium 57 mg | Sat. Fat 1 g

INGREDIENTS (Serves 12)

- 6 cups of plain instant oatmeal (from a bulk container)
- 1 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 tbsp. cinnamon
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 1/2 cup dried fruit without added sugar, such as raisins, cranberries, apricots, apples, etc.

NOTE: : Consider replacing the dried milk with a vanilla flavored protein powder to increase the protein level. This dry mix travels well, so plan ahead and pack this to use rather than defaulting to hotel or fast food options.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Use any combination of dried fruit that is desired, or just use one type. Cut the fruit to be the size of a raisin, a little larger and measure the amount called for in the recipe. If using walnut halves, crush them so they are just a little smaller.
2. In a large bowl, mix all of the ingredients together. Transfer to an airtight container.
3. To prepare, scoop about 3/4 cup of the mixture into a microwave-safe bowl or mug, add 1/2 to 2/3 cup of water (or however much you find you need to get your desired consistency) and mix well. Microwave on high for 60 seconds and let stand for one minute to cool and thicken before eating.



A LIST OF RECIPES ON [COMMISSARIES.COM/HEALTHY LIVING](https://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living) ALSO HAS NUTRITION EDUCATION.