



The Sweet Beat

Monthly eNewsletter from Michigan Sugar Company



Balanced Diet



The simple, irrefutable fact is this: Sugar is a healthy part of a diet. Carbohydrates, including sugar, are the preferred sources of the body's fuel for brain power, muscle energy and every natural process that goes on in every functioning cell.

Sugar is more than a "fun" food ingredient; it's an essential one as well. Because it's all-natural, you can consume it with confidence. As Nature's preferred sweetener, sugar is present not only in nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables, but is also a key component in foods as diverse as whole grain breads and cereals, yogurts and tomato sauces.

With only 15 calories per teaspoon, sugar is no more fattening than any other 15 calories. Like all carbohydrates, the body converts sugar into fuel quickly. Fats, on the other hand, are stored in fat cells to be used later.

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Cherry Pecan Oatmeal Bars

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. (14 oz.) caramels
- 1/2 C cream
- 2 C all-purpose flour
- 2 C quick cooking oats
- 1 1/2 C Pioneer Golden Light Brown Sugar, packed
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 C butter, melted
- 1 1/4 C semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 C pecans, chopped
- 1 C dried cherries
- extra pecans for garnish if desired



Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9 x 13-inch baking pan; set aside.

In a saucepan over medium heat, melt the caramels with the cream, stirring frequently until smooth; set aside. In a medium bowl, stir together flour, oats, brown sugar, baking soda and salt. Stir in melted butter. Press half of the mixture into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle the crust with pecans and 1 cup of the chocolate chips. Reserve 1/4 cup of the caramel mixture and drizzle the remaining caramel mixture over the ingredients in the pan. Crumble the remaining oat mixture evenly over the top and pat down lightly. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the top is golden.

Cool before cutting into bars. Melt the remaining 1/4 cup chocolate chips. Drizzle cookies with reserved caramel mixture and melted chocolate chips. Sprinkle with extra pecans if desired.

[Click here for more Recipes](#)

Defining Common Food Terms

With each year come new food products and a host of trendy terms and claims to describe them. Here are a few of the most popular and what they mean:

Natural

Use of the term "natural" is not permitted in the ingredient list, with the exception of the phrase "natural flavorings." The Food and Drug Administration requires "natural" to be used in a manner that is truthful and not misleading; the product cannot contain added color, artificial flavors or synthetic substances.

Whole

"Whole foods" generally refers to foods that are not processed or refined and do not have any added ingredients. By most definitions, whole foods include fresh produce, dairy, whole grains, meat and fish — food that appears in its most pure form with minimal processing.

Organic

As defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, organic meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic plant foods are produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation.

For more information on understanding food labels at your grocery store, visit our Nutrition Facts page at <http://www.michigansugar.com/about/education/facts.php>.

Source: American Dietetic Association's Public Relations Team

[Nutrition Facts](#)

Sweet Savings!



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