

Casual Appetizers and Easy Snacks for the Healthy Eater

By Simply Playful Fare, LLC

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Appetizers

Chicken Quesadillas

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups shredded chicken

4 green onions

8 tortillas

2 cups cheddar cheese

1/4 cup peanut butter

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon sweet chili sauce

1/4 cup water

1. In a microwave safe bowl, combine the peanut butter, soy sauce, sweet chili sauce, and water. Stir, and microwave for 30 second increments until well combined.



2. Place a tortilla on a microwave safe plate. Add 1/8 cup cheddar cheese to the tortilla. Layer with 1/4 of the chicken and green onions. Add another 1/8 cup of cheddar cheese, and top with a tortilla.





3. Microwave for 30 seconds. Turn the quesadilla over and microwave for another 30 seconds.
4. Cut into 4 slices, and serve with 1/4 of the peanut sauce.

Grilled Buffalo Wings

Ingredients

4 Pints of water (1 room temperature and 3 ice water)

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup Brown Sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup minus 1 tablespoon Salt

1 tablespoon chili powder

2 teaspoons garlic powder

2 tablespoons cayenne sauce (like Franks)

1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar

4 pounds Chicken Wings

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Franks Red Hot Sauce

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1. Bring one pint of water, brown sugar, salt, chili powder, garlic powder, cayenne sauce, and rice wine vinegar to a boil. Then reduce heat and simmer for about 5 minutes.
2. Add the mixture to a large pot, then add 3 pints of ice water to cool the brine quickly.
3. Add the wings to the cool brine. Allow the wings to sit in the brine for 2 to 6 hours.
4. Once brined, remove the wings and pat dry with paper towels. Add them to a bowl with a tiny bit of olive oil. This will keep the wings from sticking to your grill.

5. Turn on your on medium to medium-high heat, and spray with non-stick spray. Keep an eye on the wings to avoid any flare-ups on your grill. Grill for about 15 minutes, or until the wings are done.
6. Combine the melted butter and hot sauce in a large bowl. Mix well to combine.
7. Remove your wings from the grill and add them to the sauce. Toss to coat well.



Buffalo Chicken Meatballs

Ingredients:

1 1/4lb ground chicken or turkey

1/3 cup blue cheese

2 celery stocks

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

1/4 teaspoon Cajun seasoning

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

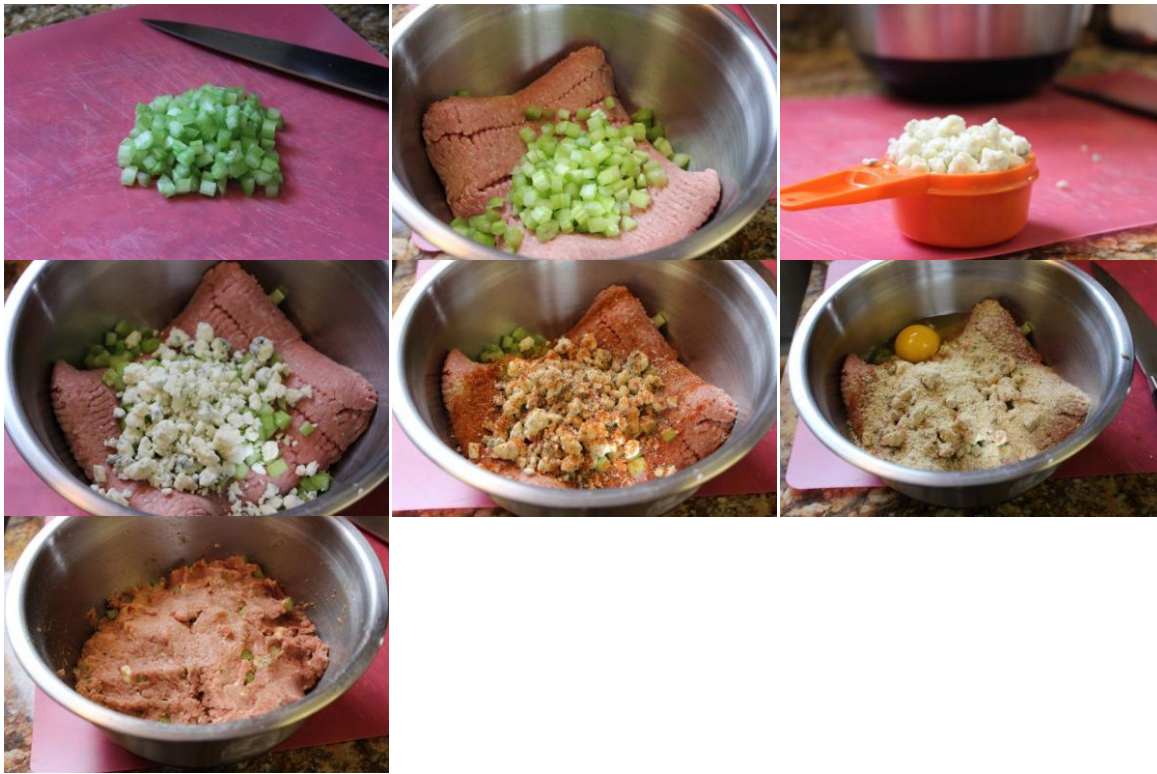
1/4 cup bread crumbs

1 egg

2 cups Franks wing sauce

Makes about 16 meatballs

1. Dump all of the ingredients, except the Franks Wing Sauce, into a mixing bowl and mix together by hand.



2. Roll into about 1 inch meatballs and place on a generously greased baking sheet lined with foil.



3. Bake in a 400 degree oven for 20-30 minutes or until meatballs are cooked. The turkey will release extra fat and juices, so don't worry if it looks like everything melted out of the meatballs.



4. Place meatballs in a crock pot set on warm, and add Franks Wing Sauce. Mix to coat.



Stuffed Mushrooms

Ingredients:

NOTE: This will make about twice the filling needed, so either store the leftover filling in the fridge and use within a week or double the mushrooms to use it all. The filling can also be used in other dishes, such as omelets or quiches.

24 oz White (or brown) mushrooms

2 celery stalks

1 lb Turkey sausage

1/2 onion

1 1/2 teaspoon fresh chopped rosemary

1 1/2 teaspoon fresh chopped thyme

1/2 teaspoon fresh chopped sage

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon fresh garlic

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese

1. Brown the turkey sausage with 1 tablespoon olive oil on medium high heat until cooked. Strain grease, if any, and set aside to cool.



2. Remove the stems from the mushrooms and align the mushroom caps on a large cookie sheet.



3. Finely chop the celery, onion, and mushroom stems and place in a medium sized bowl.



4. Chop the rosemary, thyme, sage, and garlic (if not using jarred garlic), and add to the bowl. Add salt and pepper.



5. Add the mushroom-spice mix to a large pan with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Cook until the vegetables are done. Allow to cool.



6. Add the sausage to the vegetable mixture, and mix well.



7. Once the mixture is completely cool, add the Parmesan cheese and mix well. (This is your binder.)

8. Stuff the mushroom caps with the sausage vegetable mixture to your desired full-ness (See Note above).



9. Bake for 25-30 minutes at 350, or until the mushrooms are done.



Lettuce Wraps

Ingredients:

2 chicken breasts

2 large stalks of celery

3/4 cup carrots

1/2 small red onion

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce

1/2 tablespoon ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon white pepper

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

2 tablespoons sweet chili sauce

1 dash fish sauce

2 tablespoons corn starch

2 tablespoons cold water

1 head lettuce

1. Finely chop the chicken and vegetables, and add to a medium sized mixing bowl.



2. Add the soy sauce, chili sauce, fish sauce, and spices to the bowl. Mix well.



3. Add the sesame oil to a medium sized pan, and heat on medium high heat.

4. Add the vegetable and chicken mixture to the pan and cook for about 20 minutes, or until the chicken is done.



5. Mix the corn starch and water together, and add to the chicken. Cook for about 5 minutes to allow the sauce to thicken. Remove from heat.



6. Remove individual lettuce leaves from the head, and cut into smaller pieces if desired.
7. Serve warm. Add part of the chicken vegetable mixture to a leaf of lettuce, roll, and eat.



Dragon Balls

Ingredients:

24 Prepackaged meatballs (We found ours from Costco's freezer section)

1/2 cup BBQ Sauce

1/2 cup Raspberry Jam

1 tablespoon Yellow Mustard

1/4 teaspoon liquid smoke

1 tablespoon Sriracha

1 teaspoon Worcestershire

Pepper to taste

1. Combine all ingredients (except meatballs) in a medium sized sauce pan, and bring to simmer.

2. Prepare meatballs according to the package's instructions.
3. Add meatballs to the simmering sauce.
4. Serve warm.
5. Enjoy!



Easy Snacks

Homemade Pita Chips

Ingredients:

3 Pitas
Olive oil, about 2 – 4 tablespoons
Paprika
Greek seasoning
Salt

1. Cut the pitas into sixths with a chef's knife.



2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the pitas on the baking sheet, and brush with olive oil.



3. Season with paprika, Greek seasoning, and salt.



4. Flip the triangles over and repeat the olive oil and seasoning.

5. Bake for 15 – 20 minutes at 350 degrees, flipping half way through.

6. Enjoy with your favorite dip!



Pimento Cheese

Ingredients:

8oz sharp cheddar cheese

8oz cream cheese

1/2 cup mayonnaise

4 oz pimentos (1 jar)

1/2 teaspoon onion powder

1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

3/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

1/2 teaspoon paprika

1. Add the mayonnaise, cream cheese, and spices to a bowl and beat until well combined.



2. Add the pimentos to the cheese mixture, and beat until well combined.



3. Shred the cheddar cheese, and slowly add to the mixing bowl while combining. Mix until all the cheese has been added.



4. Store in a container overnight to allow the flavors to marry.

5. Serve with celery or crackers!



Bruschetta

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pounds tomatoes

1/4 cup virgin olive oil

1/3 cup balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon chopped garlic

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1 teaspoon garlic salt

1/4 cup (powdered) Parmesan cheese

1. Chop the tomatoes into 1/2 inch pieces and add them to a container.

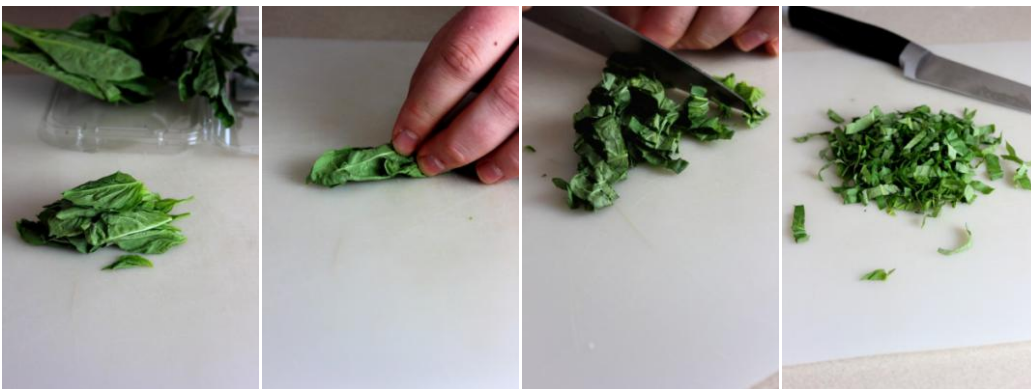
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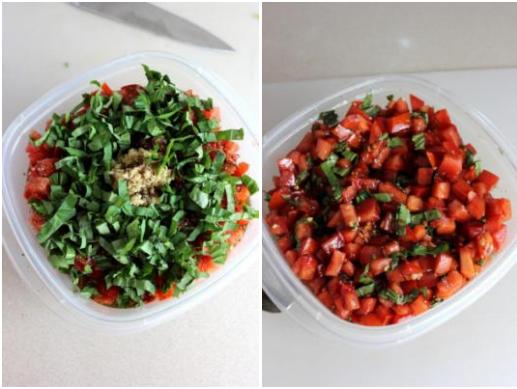
2. Add the olive oil and balsamic vinegar to the container.



3. Chiffonade the basil and add to the container.



4. Add the pepper and garlic salt and mix.



5. Add the Parmesan cheese, and mix.



Turkey and Havarti Cheese Rollups

Ingredients:

8 oz package of oven roasted turkey lunch meat

10 Slices of Havarti cheese

3 wedges of Laughing Cow garden spread



1. Place one slice of Havarti cheese on a plate.

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2. Spread a good amount of Laughing Cow cheese on the slice. Yes, Havarti does have holes in it, but the Laughing Cow is thick enough that it shouldn't ooze through too much.



3. Add the turkey slices to the cheese, and roll. Make sure to distribute the turkey evenly between all 10 slices of Havarti. You may need to cut a few slices in half.



4. Roll up!



Delicious Nut-Mixes

Strawberry Balsamic Pecan Clusters with Black Pepper

Ingredients:

1/4 cup chopped dried strawberries

1/2 pound pecans

2 teaspoons salt

1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

1/3 cup light brown sugar

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 teaspoon olive oil

227 calories, 21g (healthy) fat, 10.3g carbs, 2.6g protein, 583mg sodium

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with tin foil, and spray with nonstick spray. This step is very important. If you skip it, don't say I didn't warn you.

Chop dried strawberries and set aside.



Add pecans to a metal bowl and set aside.

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Add the rest of the ingredients to a small sauce pan and cook at medium heat. Allow to simmer for five minutes. The mixture will become thick.



Add the liquid to the pecans and mix. My motherly instincts are surfacing, so hear me when I say: you are working with hot sugar. Do not burn yourself. This is my disclaimer. I will not pay your medical bills if you do.



Add the mixture to the baking sheet and spread out. Bake for 10 minutes. Watch carefully to make sure the mixture doesn't burn.

Remove from oven and transfer to the metal bowl. Add the strawberries and mix well.



Transfer back to the baking sheet to harden, allowing the pecans and strawberries to form clusters.



Enjoy!



Festive Christmas Nut Mix

Ingredients:

1 egg white

1 tablespoon vanilla

3 tablespoons maple syrup

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon allspice

3 cups raw pecans

1 cup dried cranberries

3/4 teaspoon coarse ground salt (sea salt or kosher salt)

1. Whisk the egg white, vanilla, and maple syrup in a medium sized bowl.



2. Add the spices and whisk until well combined.



3. Add the pecans and cranberries and mix well until the pecans and cranberries are well coated.



4. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper, and pour the nut mixture onto the baking sheet.

5. Evenly sprinkle the coarse salt over the nuts. This is where you can get a little creative. We used a finishing salt flavored with vanilla. There are a ton of flavors out there, and you can find them at your local grocery store, specialty food store, or health food store bulk section. They are gaining popularity, therefore becoming easier to find.



6. Bake at 350 for 17-20 minutes, turning halfway through baking.

7. Let cool before eating.



Vanilla Almond Nut Mix

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons vanilla

1 egg white

3 cups almonds

1/2 cup cranberries

3 tablespoons honey

1/4 teaspoon salt

Black pepper to taste

1/2 teaspoon ginger

1 cup dried apples, apple chips, or freeze dried apples

1. Preheat the oven to 350. Whisk egg white and vanilla in a small bowl.



2. Add almonds and cranberries to a medium sized bowl.



3. Pour egg and vanilla mixture over almonds and cranberries, and stir until well coated.



4. Add the honey to the nut mixture and stir until well coated. This is a separate step because you don't want the cold egg to cause the honey to seize up.



5. Add salt, pepper, and ginger and mix well.



6. Add the apples and mix well. We did this last because we didn't want the freeze dried apples to soak up all the liquid.



7. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper, and add the nut mixture.



8. Bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes, rotate halfway through.



Asian Style nut mix

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons soy sauce

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon onion powder

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1/2 teaspoon white pepper

1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon dried basil (optional)

1 egg white

2 cups almonds

1/4 cup macadamia nuts

3/4 cup cashews

1. Combine soy sauce, egg white, and all spices in a medium sized bowl.



2. Add Almonds, macadamia nuts, and cashews to the bowl. Mix well.



3. Transfer nut mix to a large baking sheet covered with parchment paper.



4. Bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes, or until done. The nut mix is done when the egg white mixture is set.



Teriyaki Ginger Wasabi Pea Nut Mix

Ingredients:

3 cups walnuts, whole or pieces

1 1/2 cups wasabi peas

1 oz ginger, medium to large chopped pieces

1/3 cup teriyaki sauce

1. Preheat oven to 350. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.
2. Add walnuts and wasabi peas to a medium or large bowl and set aside. (I had some peanuts lying around, so I added them too. It was about 2/3 of a cup. Calorie count does not include peanuts because they are optional.)



3. Add teriyaki sauce and chopped ginger to a small sauce pan. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to a simmer. Simmer for about 5 minutes.



4. Pour teriyaki and ginger mixture into walnut and wasabi peas and mix until well coated.



5. Pour nut mixture onto baking sheet.



6. Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until golden brown. Turning the nut mixture halfway through baking time.



7. Let the nut mixture cool for about 20 minutes to allow glaze to set.

Sweet Treats

Fruit Salad

Ingredients:

1 cup raspberries

2 apples, diced

1 15 oz can mandarin oranges

1 20 oz can pineapple tidbits in 100% juice

1/4 cup pineapple juice, reserved

2 tablespoons mandarin orange syrup, reserved

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons honey

1. Add all the ingredients to a medium sized bowl, and mix well.



NOTE: The raspberries will dye everything purple, so if you don't want that to happen, either leave them out, or make for a large group of people so the salad won't be left to sit for a week.



Banana Muffins

Ingredients:

2 cups flour

1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

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1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

3 ripe bananas

2 eggs

1/4 cup honey

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup yogurt

2 teaspoons vanilla

6 oz dark chocolate, chopped

We are going to use the muffin method for this recipe, which means that the dry and wet ingredients are mixed separately, and then the wet is added to the dry and folded in gently. If you over-mix the muffins, they will be chewy, not fluffy. I made the mistake of adding the chocolate separately, so mine got a little chewy. Make sure to add yours into the dry ingredients.

1. In a medium sized bowl, mix the dry ingredients.



2. Chop the chocolate, and mix into the dry ingredients. This will cover the chocolate with flour, and help it from sinking to the bottom of the muffins.



3. Mash the bananas in another medium sized bowl.



4. Add the rest of the wet ingredients to the banana mixture, and mix well.

5. Add the wet ingredients to the dry, and gently fold, careful not to over-mix. The less you stir, the better.



5. Add the mixture to a well greased muffin tin.



6. Bake for 20 – 25 minutes at 350.



Raspberry Muffins

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cup unbleached flour

1 1/2 cup whole wheat flour

1/2 cup sugar

1 pinch of salt

1 tablespoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 cup coconut oil

1/2 cup water

2 eggs

1 1/2 cups low fat yogurt

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 1/2 cups raspberries, floured

1. Mix all dry ingredients, except the sugar, in a large mixing bowl.
2. Melt the coconut oil in the microwave, 30 seconds at a time, and measure out the half cup once it is liquid. If you measure it in it's solid state, it won't be accurate.
3. Mix the wet ingredients, plus the sugar, in a medium mixing bowl.
4. Add the wet ingredients into the dry, folding the wet in, careful not to over mix.

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5. Add the raspberries to a medium mixing bowl, and sprinkle with about 1/8 – 1/4 cup flour. This will help keep the berries from breaking in the batter, as much as possible. Raspberries are a delicate berry. Don't worry if they break, though, because the muffins will still taste good.
6. Carefully fold the raspberries into the batter.
7. Line a muffin tin with cupcake liners, and fill the tins with batter. Fill halfway if you want smaller muffins. Fill all the way if you want larger muffins.
8. Bake for 20 minutes at 375.



Cranberry Granola

Ingredients:

1 cup oats

1 cup chopped almonds

1/2 cup chopped cranberries

1/4 cup honey

1 teaspoon vanilla

1. Roughly chop the almonds and cranberries.



2. Add all ingredients in a medium large bowl and mix well. Remember to spray your measuring cup with nonstick spray before you add the honey. You won't believe what a world of difference this makes!



3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spread the granola out.



4. Bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes, turning halfway through. Watch the granola closely during the second half of cooking, because it will burn if left in the oven for too long. Confession: I almost burned this batch.



Blueberry Muffin Fruit and Nut Bars

Ingredients:

1 cup dried dates (try to find no sugar added)

1 cup dried blueberries (try to find no sugar added)

1 1/2 cup walnuts

2 tablespoons peanut butter

1. Add the dates and blueberries to a food processor and pulse until well chopped.



2. Add the walnuts and pulse until well chopped.



3. Add the peanut butter and pulse until well mixed.



4. Turn mixture onto a baking with parchment paper.



5. Form into bars and chill. Make sure to pack the mixture tightly, and that the bars are not too thin. Otherwise, they will fall apart.



Peanut Butter Chocolate Nut Bars

Ingredients:

2 cups dates

1 cup peanuts

2 tablespoons peanut butter

4 oz dark chocolate, chopped

1. Add the dates to a food processor and pulse until well chopped.



2. Add the peanuts and pulse until well chopped.



3. Add the peanut butter and pulse until well mixed.



4. Add the mixture to a bowl and add the chopped chocolate. Mix until well incorporated.



5. Turn mixture onto a baking with parchment paper.



6. Form into bars and chill. Make sure to pack the mixture tightly, and that the bars are not too thin. Otherwise, they will fall apart.



Pistachio Peanut Butter Energy Bites

Ingredients:

1 cup of shelled pistachios

1/3 cup natural peanut butter

1 egg

2 tablespoons honey

1/2 cup rolled oats

1. Preheat oven to 350. Add the pistachios to a food processor and pulse until pistachios are fairly chopped by not too small.



2. Add the peanut butter, egg, and honey to the food processor. Kitchen tip: Spray your tablespoon with non-stick spray before adding the honey. This will keep it from sticking to the tablespoon. Pulse until well mixed.



3. Add the mixture to a medium sized bowl and stir in the oats. (If you want to make a gluten free recipe, substitute your flour of choice and add to the food processor to mix. Skip this step and go directly to rolling into bites. I want to keep the oats whole and not pulverize them.



4. Roll the mixture into about 1 1/2 inch thick balls. This should make about 16 bites, depending on how big you make them. Place the bites onto a large cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.



5. Bake for 15 minutes at 350, or until golden brown. Note: The bottom of the bites may get a little dark, so if this bothers you, turn them over half-way though baking.



Pantry Granola

Ingredients:

1 egg white

1/4 cup honey

1 tablespoon vanilla

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 cup pecans

1 cup walnuts

1/2 cup chopped dates

1/4 cup chopped, dried strawberries

1/4 cup pepitas

1 cup oats

1/4 cup flax seed meal

1. Chop the pecans, walnuts, dates, and strawberries, and set aside.
2. Whisk the egg white in a medium sized bowl. Add the vanilla, honey, and cinnamon, and mix well.



3. Add the rest of the ingredients, and mix well.



4. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Spread the mixture onto the sheet, evenly.



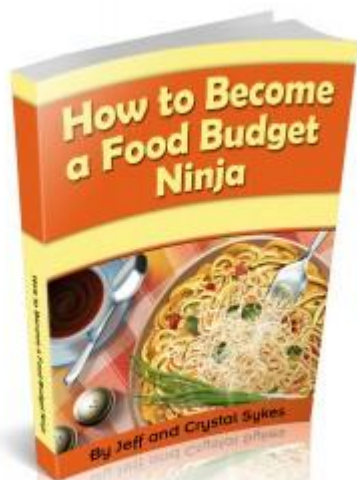
5. Bake for 15 – 20 minutes at 350, turning once or twice. You'll want to break up the granola a bit, while still allowing it to clump.



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