

Our State eats

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Date Nut Bars

Yield: 9 to 12 bars.

For the filling:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 (8-ounce) package pitted dates, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped walnuts

For the crust:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup uncooked quick-cooking oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, softened
- Fresh orange zest or curls (optional, for garnish)

Grease 8-inch square baking dish; set aside. Combine water, brown sugar, and dates in saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, for 4 to 5 minutes or until mixture thickens and comes to a boil. Add walnuts and stir. Cool at least 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350°. Combine crust ingredients in food processor. Pulse 6 to 8 times until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

Press half of the crumb mixture into prepared pan, making sure to press in each corner. Spoon filling evenly over crust; sprinkle the remaining crumbs evenly over filling. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until top crust is lightly browned. Cool completely. Cut into bars and garnish with fresh orange zest or curls.



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