

BON APPETIT HON

bon appétit for enjoy your meal

Cranberry Oat Bars

Washington Post Adaptation from "Christmas 101: 100 Festive Recipes With Menus and Timetables for Stress Free Holiday Entertaining" by Rick Rodgers

BAH Note: The recipe tells you to use your fingertips to combine the cold butter into the dry ingredients. I found it just as easy, and far less messy, to do this in my stand mixer using the paddle attachment. Work on low speed and in about five minutes or so, you'll have a nicely incorporated, crumbly dough. Also, the recipe has you heating your oven while you make the filling. But that filling is going to have to cool completely, which is going to take a while. So you may want to wait until the filling has cooled before you preheat your oven.

- 2 cups cranberries, fresh or frozen
- 3/4 cup sugar
- zest of 1 medium orange (about 2 teaspoons)
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 1/2 cups old fashioned rolled oats (do not use quick cooking or instant)
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) chilled butter, cut into small cubes

Heat to 350 degrees with a rack in the middle position. Lightly grease an 8 inch square baking pan with nonstick cooking spray, then line with a double thickness of aluminum foil so that the foil extends beyond 2 opposite ends of the pan. Fold the overhang down to form handles. Lightly grease the foil with the spray.

Combine the cranberries, sugar, and orange zest in a medium saucepan over medium high heat. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring often, or until the filling has thickened and reduced to about 1 cup. Transfer to a bowl to cool completely.

Meanwhile, combine the flour, oats, brown sugar, baking powder and salt in a medium mixing bowl. Add the butter and use your fingertips to work it into the dry ingredients until well combined and crumbly. Press half of the mixture firmly and evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan and spread the cooled cranberry filling on top. Sprinkle the remaining crumbly mixture over the filling and gently press into an even layer.

Bake for about 40 minutes, until the top is evenly browned. Transfer the pan to a wire rack to cool completely. Once cooled, run a knife around the inside edges of the pan to release the bars from the sides. Lift up on the foil handles to remove the bars from the pan. Carefully cut into 16 bars.