Oatmeal Raisin Bars: Chewy American Oat Squares

Hearty rolled oats and plumped raisins baked into buttery golden squares



PREP	COOK	TOTAL	SERVES	CALORIES
10 min	27 min	47 min	20 bars	185 kcal

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 cup raisins, plumped in hot water for 5 minutes and drained
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts, optional

Instructions

1. Prepare the oven: Preheat your oven to 175 °C (350 °F). Line an 8-inch square pan with parchment paper and leave an overhang. This ensures you can lift the slab out without damaging the bars.
2. Cream butter and sugar: Beat the softened butter and brown sugar in a medium bowl for 1–2 minutes. Mix until the texture is light and creamy. This aeration creates a better lift in the finished bake.
3. Incorporate wet ingredients: Whisk in the egg and vanilla until fully combined. You are looking for a smooth mixture with a bright colour. This ensures the fats and liquids emulsify correctly.
4. Mix in dry ingredients: Stir the flour, oats, and cinnamon into the wet mixture. Mix only until combined. Do not overmix, or you will develop too much gluten and lose the tender crumb.
5. Fold in inclusions: Gently fold in the plumped raisins and walnuts. Ensure they are distributed evenly. Be careful not to break the raisins so they remain whole pockets of sweetness.

6. Press and bake: Press the batter into the pan using a spatula and smooth the top with a wet finger. Bake for 25–27 minutes. Remove them when the edges are golden and a toothpick comes out clean.
7. Cool and slice: Let the bars rest in the pan for 10 minutes to set. Lift them onto a wire rack to cool completely. Slice into 20 equal 1-inch squares using a sharp knife.

Notes

What goes wrong and whyOvermixing the batter develops too much gluten in the flour, which makes your bars tough rather than chewy. Spot this early by watching for a heavy, elastic texture as you stir. Stop mixing the moment the dry ingredients vanish to ensure a tender, soft crumb in every square.

What to serve with itPair these bars with a cup of herbal tea or a splash of apple juice for a comforting snack. For a more substantial treat, top each bar with a spoonful of plain yogurt and a drizzle of honey to add a protein boost to the sweetness of the raisins.

Storing and reheatingKeep bars in a tightly sealed airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days. For longer storage, freeze them in an airtight bag for up to 2 months. Thaw at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving to restore the original chewy texture and flavour.