

Published April 14th, 2021

## Dates, maple and pecans make this bar a perfect pick-me-up

By Susie Iventosch



Date, Maple & Toasted Pecan Energy Bars Photos  
Susie Iventosch

The combination of toasted pecans, dates, maple flavoring and a little Himalayan salt is delicious! A bit of fresh lemon sets off the sweetness, just right, too. These bars are kind of like Lara Bars or the Thunderbird Real Food Bars and they are a great source of quick and lasting energy. My daughter and I were starving after a hot yoga class one day, and stopped in for a coffee drink at a café on our way home. When I spied the Texas Maple Pecan Bar it struck me as the perfect energy snack that we were craving. It was so delicious that we went home and immediately started plotting out our own recipe. This is the recipe we came up with and we are very happy with the results.

Dates are a great source of dietary fiber and carbohydrates in the form of fruit sugar. Due to the natural fiber, the fruit is low on the Glycemic Index, and this helps to slow down the sugar absorption, resulting in a no-crash source of energy. Medjool dates, grown in Israel and other parts of the Mediterranean, are known

for their soft texture and honey like taste. We use them in our Waioli Date Bars (we will share that recipe soon) and also in this recipe. I think they'd be wonderful skewered with chicken and shallots for a fun Mediterranean kebab, too.

Toasting the pecans makes these bars extra-delicious and maple flavoring is a key component, too. If you have trouble finding maple extract at your grocery store, you can find several suppliers online. Cook's puts out a pure maple extract that you can buy on Amazon or through Walmart, too.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. Medjool dates, pitted
- 1 cup toasted pecans, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon Himalayan pink salt
- 1/2 teaspoon maple extract
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

### DIRECTIONS

Line an 8-inch square baking dish with parchment paper. Spray paper with cooking spray.

Toast the Pecans:

Preheat oven to 350 F. Place pecans on a baking sheet and bake for about 8-10 minutes, just until beginning to brown. They will smell fantastically aromatic as they are toasting. Keep an eye on them, because you can burn pecans in the blink of an eye! Remove from oven when toasted and cool. Once cooled, finely chop. Set aside.

Puree the Dates:

Make sure all of the pits are removed from the dates, or buy pitted dates. (If using pitted dates, I always like to check to make sure they've all been pitted before putting them in the food processor, because inevitably there is a straggler.)

Place pitted dates in the bowl of your food processor. Process into a chunky paste. If there are some chunks left, no problem, they will easily incorporate into the bars.

Remove pureed dates to a mixing bowl. Stir in the toasted, chopped pecans, salt, maple extract and lemon juice. Mix well. Mixture will be sticky.

Turn mixture into the prepared baking dish and press down with your fingers or a flat spatula so that the entire dish is covered with about 1/4-inch of the date mixture. If using your fingers, you may need to coat them with a little oil to keep the mixture from sticking to them.

Refrigerate until firm. Cut into rectangles or squares and wrap each in parchment paper or plastic wrap until ready to eat.



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com). If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Reach the reporter at: [suziven@gmail.com](mailto:suziven@gmail.com)

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