

Nanaimo Bars – A Kinda Healthier Version

A while ago I described my experiments with making the Canadian's Famous Nanaimo Bars using the ingredients more readily available in New Zealand (<http://www.techmonkeybusiness.com/nanaimo-bars-and-other-dangerous-experiments.html>). I also alluded to the horrific health hit eating a Classic Nanaimo bar would have on your health and vowed to develop a “safer Nanaimo Bar”. By “safer”, I mean healthier than the original Nanaimo bar, but still not as “safe” as a Bean and Kale Salad.



So much for fancy food photos.

So this recipe significantly reduces the fat and sugar content. I will admit it tastes less like a real Nanaimo Bar, but still has plenty in common. What it ended up being is a bit of a hybrid between a Nanaimo Bar and a Custard Square.

A Slightly Healthier Nanaimo Bar Recipe

Bottom Layer

The biscuit / fudge layer in this version uses a small amount of butter, peanut butter, and honey as a binder rather than the large quantities of butter and sugar that the original used. We don't use coconut oil or coconut butter because that is worse than dairy butter.

- 1¾ cups of rolled oats. Buzz these in a blender a bit if using the large flaked rolled oats,
- ¾ cup of crunchy peanut butter. (Er yeah... Those with a peanut allergy may want to turn away.)
- 3 Tablespoons of real cocoa (not that adulterated crap from Cadbury)
- 4 Tablespoons of butter
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- ⅓ cup mix of honey with some maple syrup

First melt the butter together with the cocoa, honey, peanut butter, and vanilla in the microwave on low. When it is all melted add the rolled oats, and sunflower seeds. Spread it all on a deepish dish and refrigerate it.

The Custard Layer

This is basically just a thick custard. If you don't want such a yellow and custardy tasting layer then just substitute cornflour for the custard powder (after all the custard powder we have here is just cornflour with some flavouring.)

- ½ cup Custard Powder (or Cornflour)
- 2 Tablespoons of brown sugar
- 6 Tablespoons of milk powder (we got away with using non-fat milk powder)
- 2 cups of water
- 2 eggs
- ½ teaspoon of Vanilla essence.

Make up the custard according to the packet. Basically, just add all of the ingredients except for the egg to a microwave proof bowl, and heat it through slowly and gently, stirring regularly. It should take the order of 5-6 minutes on HIGH while giving it a stir every minute. It should be starting to thicken after this. Add the eggs and stir in. Continue to heat gently until it thickens again.

The Top Layer

Because the top layer is quite a small volume compared to the rest of the slice we just used the same recipe as the original Nanaimo bar.

- 120g of fair trade chocolate or 120g of 72% cocoa dark Ghana Whittaker's chocolate. You know the real stuff made with real cocoa.
- 2 Tablespoons of unsalted butter

Melt chocolate and butter in the microwave on low and allow to cool. While it still has some ability to be spread, pour it over the second layer and then chill it in the refrigerator. Score it into slice size bits before it cools too much.

