



# TIPS & TRICKS

## *Peanut Butter Oatmeal Bites*

### Nutrition

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting the intake of sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars. The main source of added sugars in the American diet is sugar-sweetened beverages, but desserts are also a large contributor. These peanut butter oatmeal bites are a nutritious sweet treat.
- The MyPlate recommends eating balanced meals. The same logic applies to snacks. When choosing snacks, try to include at least two food groups. This helps you feel fuller for a longer period of time. This recipe contains whole grains from the oatmeal, protein from peanut butter and nuts, and even a bit of fruit from the applesauce and dried fruit.
- Not all fats are created equal. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends reducing intake of saturated fats. Choosing unsaturated fat in place of saturated fat can reduce your risk of heart disease and improve “good” (HDL) cholesterol levels. This recipe uses applesauce and peanut butter in place of butter, which is often used in cookies.

### Cooking Tips

- If allowing younger ones to help with this dish, let them help measure easier ingredients like the oats, nuts, and brown sugar. Use this opportunity to teach them about packing brown sugar and the difference between a liquid measuring cup and a dry measuring cup. An easy way to remember which is which is that a liquid measuring cup almost always has a spout.

- When measuring sticky ingredients like peanut butter or honey, spray the measuring cup with nonstick spray first. This will ensure all of the peanut butter is in the recipes, instead of stuck inside the measuring cup!
- If using bananas instead of applesauce, use bananas that are very ripe, with lots of brown spots. This will create a chewier texture and sweeter taste as opposed to using unripe bananas.
- For nut allergies, substitute sunflower seed butter for peanut butter in this recipe.
- To be sure cookies cook evenly, it is important that the dough balls are the same size. A measuring spoon or cookie scoop are great tools for this task.
- When flattening the tops of the cookies before baking, if you notice the dough sticking to the back of the spoon, run the spoon under water and then flatten the tops.
- If substituting old fashioned oats for quick oats, the texture of the cookie may be crumblier.

### Teaching Points

- You can use this recipe with the HCEB lesson on Better Beverage Choices. The cooking skill for the lesson is focused on healthy beverages and snacks.
- You can also use this recipe with HCYRB lesson, Shifting Toward Healthier Choices. The cooking skill is snacks.

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- For other lessons and topics, this recipe has ingredients that can highlight discussions about whole grains (oats), protein foods (peanut butter, egg, and nuts), and fiber (fruit, oats, and nuts).
- The Peanut Butter Oatmeal Bites are similar to cookies and those are always appealing to kids! Teach this to youth groups.
- Peanut butter, dried fruit, nuts, and oats are common commodity foods. Share this recipe with participants who receive commodities as a way to demonstrate a creative use of those foods.



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