

Chai Spiced Pumpkin Bars

Makes 9 large or 16 small squares

For the crust:

1/2 cup old-fashioned rolled oats (certified gluten-free if necessary)
1/2 cup pumpkin seeds
1/2 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup pitted dates, chopped — plus a few more if needed

For the filling:

1 1/2 cups pumpkin puree
1/3 cup maple syrup or coconut nectar (or to taste)
1/4 cup melted coconut oil
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon cardamom
3/4 teaspoon ginger
1/4 teaspoon cloves
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons coconut flour

Directions:

Line an 8"x8" baking pan with parchment paper so you can lift the bars out for cutting.

To prepare the crust, place the oats, pumpkin seeds, coconut, cinnamon, and salt in a food processor and pulse until finely ground. Add 2/3 cup dates and process until well combined and sticky. The mixture may look crumbly, but it should hold together when pinched between your fingers. If necessary, add more dates to get the right consistency.

Press the dough firmly and evenly into the baking pan. Place the pan in the freezer while you prepare the filling.

To make the filling, combine the pumpkin puree, maple syrup, coconut oil, vanilla, salt, and spices in a food processor. Blend until smooth. Add the coconut flour and blend until well combined. Adjust sweetener if desired.

Remove the pan from the freezer and pour the filling on top, spreading it out evenly. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or overnight.

Lift the bars out of the pan using the parchment paper edges. Use a chef's knife to cut the bars, wiping the knife clean between cuts. Serve chilled.

Recipe Notes

If you like, you can decorate the bars with coconut flakes, a dusting of cinnamon, pumpkin seeds, and/or a dollop of coconut whipped cream.