

Eat Well, Be Well

Homemade Crackers: the ultimate good snack

By Ellen Gibson

Many of the foods that are available "ready made" can be prepared at home: pizza, bread, cookies, jam, tomato sauce to name a few. I like to cook, and I like to know what's in my food, so I make things at home when I can.

Crackers though? Until my sister-in-law introduced me to this recipe, I never thought about making them. But crackers made at home are

- 1) easy
- 2) delicious
- 3) good for you

They are a great snack for kids, especially with a glass of milk or a piece of cheese.

The dough is similar to piecrust, but it's a snap to handle. If it tears while rolling it out, a simple patch will do. Roll the dough out directly onto a baking sheet. I use a straight sided jar because it's shorter than a rolling pin and you need the maneuverability. Keep it nice

and floury so it doesn't stick.

You can vary the recipe by adding 1 cup walnuts to the oatmeal and grinding it all up. 3 TBSP poppy seeds sweeten the crackers, 3 TBSP sesame seeds make them more savory. You can also add ½ cup of sunflower seeds. I put all my additions in the dough. That guarantees the seeds won't fall off.

This is not a recipe for multi-tasking. Between rolling out the crackers, checking them in the oven, and cooling them on the racks, there's no time to spare!

Ingredients:

3 cups rolled oats, ground in a food processor

1 cup ground walnuts (optional)

2 cups unbleached white flour

1 cup wheat germ

4-6 TBSP brown sugar

1 ½ tsp. salt

¾ cup canola oil

1 cup water

Preheat oven to 350.

Mix together the dry ingredients. Mix the oil and water in a liquid measuring cup and stir to combine. Add to the dry ingredients to make a dough that holds together. If the dough is crumbly, add water bit by bit until it will form a ball.

Set a small amount of flour aside for rolling out the dough. Take a handful of dough and place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Before you start rolling it out, sprinkle with flour. To roll the dough, I use a short glass with straight sides and keep it well floured. The thinner you can roll the dough, the better.

Cut dough into cracker sized shapes. Don't worry that they are different sizes. A pizza cutter works well, but a knife will do.

Bake for 30 minutes. The crackers at the edge will cook faster. Check at 10 minutes. As crackers brown, remove them from the pan

and cool on rack. Put the others back into the oven to continue baking until brown and crisp. (5 minute intervals work well.) Thicker crackers in the middle of the pan will take the entire 30 minutes and should be brown on the bottom.

Cool on rack and store in airtight container.

Ellen Gibson is on the Maine AgrAbility staff. Maine AgrAbility works with people across the agricultural spectrum all over the state to keep them employed after an injury, chronic illness or disability. We work with farmers, loggers, and fishermen. The program is funded by the USDA and is a partnership with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Alpha One Independent Living Center, and Goodwill of Northern New England. Check out our success stories at <https://extension.umaine.edu/agrability/> and like us on Facebook.

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