

Strength in Plants *By Kate Murray*



There are no tricks in this oatmeal treat



These oatmeal cookie bars are free of processed sugars.

SPECIAL TO THE READING EAGLE: KATE MURRAY

not just for your children, but for you, too. Think of it this way: Medication cannot address years of bad food choices, inactivity or chronic stress. You have the choice to choose what you eat and what you feed your children each day. Give this healthy version of a cookie a try the next time you're called upon to send in a home-baked treat.

Oatmeal cookie bars

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1 1/2 cups oat flour (you can grind up the oats in a processor or use actual oat flour)
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup

PREP: Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees and line an 8x10 baking dish with parchment paper. In a large bowl, combine the rolled oats, oat flour and spices. In a smaller bowl, whisk together the milk and maple syrup. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and fold together until well combined, adding more maple syrup if necessary. (The mixture will be sticky). Use a spatula to press it down evenly into the baking dish. Bake for 25 minutes and then allow it to cool fully before cutting into bars. This makes about 12 bars, so you may need to prepare a double batch for the typical elementary classroom. 🍪

Kate Murray is certified in plant-based nutrition and the author of "A Silent Cure in My Back Yard." Find more recipes at asilentcure.org.

IF YOU have children in elementary school, you may have noticed that in recent years, the schools have instituted policies whereby home-baked treats (in terms of sending in cupcakes for a child's birthday) are frowned upon.

I think this is both good and bad. The overall idea is to limit the amount of processed sugar and junk food that gets into the

mouths of our children. This is a great concept, but there are times when a home-baked treat is actually a much better alternative to a packaged product, such as candy at Halloween. The school Halloween party is one of those times when they seem to lighten up and allow parents to send in treats.

I have to admit, this is not my favorite time of the year, so I often find myself going out of my

way to volunteer to send in a treat. At least I know my home-baked alternative is something that is healthy, as well as something the children would consider a treat.

The basic principles behind the school policies and of the clean-eating movement are founded on sound nutrition. My philosophy is, once you get used to it, cooking and eating clean is actually an easy choice,

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