

Traditional Canadian Date Squares (Matrimonial Cake): The Ultimate Comfort Treat

To hydrate and soften the fruit.



Canadian Date Squares

You will need:

- 2½ cups Medjool dates, pitted & chopped
- 1½ cups quick oats
- ¼ cup butter, softened

OVEN
350°F

TIME
3 min

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INGREDIENTS

For the Date Filling:

2 1/2 cups Medjool dates: Pitted and roughly chopped.

1 cup water: To hydrate and soften the fruit.

2 tbsp lemon juice: Adds a necessary acidic zing.

2 tbsp brown sugar: Just enough to enhance the natural sugars.

1/2 tsp baking soda: This is the secret to a silky smooth filling.

For the Oat Layers:

1 3/4 cups quick oats: Provides the classic chewy texture.

1 cup all-purpose flour: The binding agent for our crumble.

3/4 cup brown sugar: Packed for a deep, molasses-like sweetness.

1/4 tsp baking powder: Gives the crumble a slight lift.

3/4 cup butter: Softened to room temperature for easy mixing.

DIRECTIONS

1. Prep the : Station: Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Lightly grease an 8x8-inch baking pan and line it with parchment paper, leaving an overhang on the sides for easy removal.
2. Simmer the : Filling: In a medium saucepan, combine your chopped dates, water, lemon juice, and brown sugar. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently. As the water evaporates, the dates will break down into a thick paste (about 10 minutes).
3. The : Secret Step: Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the baking soda. The mixture will foam slightly-this is normal! It softens the date skins perfectly. Set aside to cool.
4. Make the : Crumble: In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the oats, flour, brown sugar, and baking powder.
5. Cut in the : Butter: Add the softened butter. Use your fingers or a pastry cutter to work the butter into the dry ingredients until it looks like coarse, damp crumbs.
6. Build the : Base: Take exactly half of your oat mixture and press it firmly into the bottom of your prepared pan. Pro Tip: Use the bottom of a flat measuring cup to pack it down hard; this prevents the bars from falling apart.
7. Layer the : Fruit: Spread the cooled date mixture evenly over the base.
8. The : Topping: Sprinkle the remaining oat mixture over the top. Press down very lightly-just enough to make sure the oats adhere to the jam.
9. Bake: Slide the pan into the oven for 30-35 minutes.

You're looking for a beautiful golden-brown color on the edges.

10. The : Hardest Part: Let the bars cool completely in the pan. If you cut them while warm, they will crumble into a (delicious) mess.

SWAPS & NOTES

The Oats: I recommend quick oats over large-flake rolled oats for this specific recipe.

Quick oats create a tighter "crust" that holds together better when sliced.

The Dates: While Medjool dates are the gold standard for their soft texture, regular Deglet Noor dates work too-just simmer them for an extra 2-3 minutes.

Gluten-Free: You can easily swap the all-purpose flour for a 1:1

gluten-free flour blend and ensure your oats are certified GF.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Firm Pressure: I can't emphasize this enough-press that bottom layer firmly!

It acts as the foundation for the entire bar.

The "Clean Cut": For those perfect bakery-style squares, chill the entire pan in the fridge for an hour after it has reached room temperature before slicing.

Date Quality: If your dates feel very hard or dry before cooking, soak them in the water for 15 minutes before turning on the heat.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/traditional-canadian-date-squares-matrimonial-cake-the-ultimate-comfort-treat/>