

## MeritCare Medical Center

### Aunt Cathy's **Industrial Strength “Instant” Oatmeal Recipe**

(By popular demand . . . one person 😊)



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There are just the two of us, but on the weekends one of us will cook up a big batch of hot cereal. Depending on what we have around, it usually contains something like the following. Measurements are certainly not exact (we use the time-honored scoop and fling method,) but it often comes out sort of in this ratio:

1 cup of stone-ground oats

½ cup oat bran

½ cup wheat bran

½ cup of wheat germ

½ cup of ground flax

-about a cup of raw almonds that come with the brown coating on them (cheapest at warehouse-type stores), chopped up. Slivered almonds are easy but much more pricey. You could use walnuts instead, or in addition.

-about a cup of raisins (especially yummy: the big red-grape raisins also available in those stores) Be creative . . . how about dried apricots or mango bits?

Add anything else you want in any amount and leave out anything above you don't want.

Usually I start with about a quart or so (i.e. unmeasured) of water in a big heavy pot (something like a small size pressure cooker bottom – the heaviness keeps it from having hot spots and sticking.) Add the raisins and chopped nuts. Bring to boil. Add everything else in any order, but the oat bran does best if you don't just dump it in but stir it in a bit more gradually. You could even mix it all together in a bowl first and add it all at once to the water, but I am never clever enough to think so far ahead.

Bring it back to a boil on low or medium and stir and cook it as long as it says on the stone-ground oat package. If it gets too dry or starts to stick, just add more water. The water just depends on how you like your hot cereal – thin or thick. Your call!

We eat some on the day we make it (usually Sunday) and put all the rest in a covered plastic container in the refrigerator. Then, while racing around in the morning to get to work, we just microwave a “slab” of the cold cereal and it is the very best tasting “instant” oatmeal in the world. It has lots of great nutrition (magnesium, protein, omega-3 fats, vitamin E, B vitamins, soluble fiber to lower cholesterol, non-soluble fiber to keep things moving, a variety of beneficial phytochemicals, etc., etc.) and really fast.

I put milk and a packet of sugar substitute or sugar on mine. Dan puts a “heart healthy” margarine (no trans, etc.) and brown sugar on his. A friend puts jelly or syrup in it. Go wild! 😊

Some folks are not really good breakfast eaters. In that case, you can also take it cold in a plastic container to work and microwave it to have it as a coffee-break snack or for lunch. You could even pre-fill several small containers the day you make it and just “grab one and run out the door.”

One could also do kind of a “Master Mix” approach to make preparation even easier and faster. Just add all the dry ingredients (including the nuts and raisins) and put them in a freezer bag. You want to keep the mixture refrigerated or frozen in order to keep the flax and wheat germ happy. Anyway, when you experience the urge to cook a big pot of cereal, just grab one of your ready-to-go bags of mixed ingredients from the freezer, boil water and dump in the cereal combo. For the truly home-economically gifted, one could set aside one day a year and fill a small chest freezer with a year’s supply of ready-to-add cereal mix. Impress your friends. It would certainly impress me!

One other idea: Sometimes I actually cook dinner (“Gasp!”) and I find that it is pretty easy to make up a batch of this cereal for the next day while preparing an evening meal. You can do it while the Tater Tots are baking! 😊