

Energy Bombs

Power Bites to Fuel Your Day



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On a Roll

It's time to play ball and energize your day or workout, one bite at a time.

Energy balls, bliss balls, power balls, energy bites, whatever you call them balls are all the rage these days among the fitness crowd and snacking aficionados. When crafted with a few simple whole-food ingredients they deliver clutch nutritional value that deservedly makes them a popular snack choice. Dare I say the ping-pong sized balls are the new energy bar? You get protein, healthy fat, and whole grains—all in a portable bite-size snack. I never start a bikepacking trip without a feedbag full of energy balls to help power a ride and deliver a mental boost when needed most. You can make-em-in-minutes: toss a few ingredients into a food processor (or just a large bowl) and then simply roll into hunger-taming goodness. From morning to night, these super tasty snacks will keep you going strong. Time to raid those bulk bins!

Energy Crush

Side-step energy ball pitfalls by following this foolproof formula for success.

Tool of the Trade: Your blender is great for smoothies.

Energy balls? Not so much. For this job, you want to fire up a food processor. It's ideal for mashing up dried fruit and nuts for ball recipes where there is no liquid involved.

Tutti Frutti: There is a reason most energy ball recipes call for dried fruit – beyond adding natural sweetness they serve as perfect binders. Dates, figs, apricots and dried cherries all work well. If using especially dry dates (often the less expensive deglet noor variety) instead of moister medjool dates its best to soak them first to soften. Nut butters and sticky liquid sweeteners such as honey also help bind balls together so you don't bite into a crumbly mess.

Take the Pinch Test: After blending, your ball mixture should stick together easily when pinched between your fingers. If too crumbly, blend in some additional binder – dried fruit, nut butter or liquid sweetener.

Stay Fresh: These balls aren't your standard packaged energy bars that can hang around in your pantry for eons. To keep them fresh-tasting, stash balls in the refrigerator for up to 7 days. Balls also keep well in the freezer for 3 to 4 months. Place a piece of parchment paper on a baking sheet and spread the balls out on the sheet. Pop them in the freezer for about two hours, the transfer the solid nuggets to an airtight container for storage.

Size Matters: Aim for balls that offer up no more than 150 calories per ball – remember, they are a snack not a meal. That means you should not roll them into the size of beach balls. You're aiming for something slightly smaller than golf ball-sized. Most often, two balls is a reasonable portion size.

Lend a Hand: For a less sticky mess on your hands, it can be helpful to use slightly dampened hands when rolling the balls.

Protein Power: No matter what energy bites recipe you rustle up, you can always experiment with adding some protein powder for a muscle-building boost. Just make sure you add a little extra dry fruit or sweetener to compensate for the extra dryness.

Extra Credit: For a flavour and nutritional boost think beyond just the fruit, nuts and oats. Look for ways to sneak in healthy add-ins like chia seeds, hemp hearts, cacao nibs, spices including cinnamon, citrus zest and even superfood powders such as acai or matcha.

Change it Up: Balls can be the chameleon of your kitchen, meaning that their ingredients need not be set in stone. Switch things up based on your tastes, dietary needs and what ingredients you have hanging around. For instance, you could swap out the peanut butter for sunflower butter, the oats for quinoa flakes or the dates for dried figs.

On-the-Go: To take energy balls with you on an adventure into the wilds stash them in a small zip-top bag or, even better, bundle them up in a reusable beeswax wrap such as Abeego (abeego.com)

Pumpkin Cranberry Balls



Ingredients

1 ½ cups rolled oats	3 tablespoons honey
1/3 cup dried cranberries	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/3 cup ground flaxseed	1 teaspoon allspice
1/3 cup peanut butter	1/8 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup pure pumpkin puree	

Directions

In a medium-sized bowl combine all ingredients and stir with a wooden spoon to combine. The batter will be thick. Place bowl in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Form into 1-inch balls and place in an airtight container.

Switch Hits

- Swap out peanut butter for almond butter
- Replace cranberries with dried cherries
- Add spice with cinnamon instead of allspice
- Use mashed butternut squash instead of pumpkin

PB&J Balls



Ingredients

- 1 cup pitted dates
- 1/2 cup unsalted roasted peanuts
- 3/4 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup dried cherries
- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Place dates in a bowl, cover with hot water and let soak 30 minutes. Drain and pat excess water away with a paper towel. Place peanuts and oats in a food processor bowl and process until pulverized into small pieces. Add drained dates, cherries, oats, peanut butter and salt. Blend until the mixture sticks together when pressed between your fingers. Form into 1-inch balls. You should get about 16 balls.

Switch Hits

- Swap out dates for prunes or soaked dried figs
- Use quinoa flakes in replace of oats
- Try dried cranberries instead of cherries

Maple Apple Balls



Ingredients

1 cup pitted dates

1 cup rolled oats

1 cup pecans

1 cup dried apples (preferably the baked crunchy type not the soft type)

1/4 cup maple syrup

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Place dates in a bowl and soak in hot water for 30 minutes. Drain and pat away excess moisture with a paper towel.

In a food processor, blend together oats, pecans and dried apple into small pieces. Add drained dates, maple syrup, vanilla, cinnamon and salt; blend until mixture sticks together. Roll into 1-inch balls. You should get about 14 balls.

Switch Hits

- Blend in walnuts instead of pecans
- Try prunes (dried plums) in replace of dates

Dirty Chai Oatmeal Balls



Ingredients

1 tablespoon instant espresso powder	1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1 1/4 cups rolled oats	1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
2 tablespoons cacao nibs	1/2 cup almond butter
3/4 teaspoon cinnamon	1/3 cup honey
1/4 teaspoon cardamom	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon ginger powder	

Directions

Dissolve espresso powder in 2 tablespoons hot water. In a large bowl, stir together oats, cacao nibs, cinnamon, cardamom, ginger powder, cloves and nutmeg. Add almond butter, honey, dissolved espresso and vanilla. Use a spatula to stir to combine. Place bowl in freezer for about 10 minutes (or the fridge for 20 minutes) to help make it easier to form the mixture into balls. Form mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get 12 balls.

Switch Hits

- Replace almond butter for peanut butter
- Swap out cacao nibs for mini chocolate chips
- Use date syrup instead of honey

Apricot Tahini Balls



Ingredients

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3/4 cup rolled oats | 2 teaspoons lemon zest |
| 1 cup dried apricots | 1 teaspoon ginger powder |
| 1/4 cup ground flaxseed | 1/8 teaspoon salt |
| 1/4 cup tahini | |
| 3 tablespoons honey | |

Directions

Place oats in a food processor container and pulse until they are pulverized. Add remaining ingredients to container and blend until mixture sticks together when pressed between your fingers.

Roll mixture into 1-inch sized balls. You should get about 14 balls.

Switch Hits

- Try orange zest instead of lemon zest
- Use brown rice or agave syrup instead of honey
- Swap out oats for quinoa flakes

Mocha Balls



Ingredients

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 tablespoon instant espresso powder | 2 teaspoons lemon zest |
| 1/2 cup almonds | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 3/4 cup rolled oats | 1/4 teaspoon cardamom |
| 1 1/2 cups raisins | 1/8 teaspoon salt |
| 1/3 cup dried coconut flakes | |
| 2 tablespoons almond butter | |
| 3 tablespoons cocoa powder | |
| 2 tablespoons chia seeds (optional) | |

Directions

Place espresso powder in a small bowl, add 2 tablespoons boiled water and stir to dissolve. Let rest 10 minutes.

Place nuts and oats in a food processor container and process until pulverized. Add dissolved coffee, raisins, coconut, almond butter, cocoa powder, chia seeds if using, lemon zest, vanilla, cardamom and salt; blend until mixture clumps together. Form into 1-inch balls. You should get about 20 balls.

Switch Hits

- Try dried currants in replace of raisins
- Use peanuts and peanut butter instead of almond
- Boost flavor with orange zest instead of lemon

Carrot Cake Balls



Ingredients

1 medium carrot, shredded	1 teaspoon ginger powder
1 cup raisins	3/4 teaspoon ground allspice
3/4 cup walnuts	1/8 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup dried shredded coconut	
1/4 cup ground flaxseed	
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	

Directions

Place all of the ingredients in a food processor container and blend until the mixture clumps together. Roll into 1-inch balls. You should get at least 12 balls.

Switch Hits

- Use dried currants instead of raisins
- Replace walnuts with pecans or almonds
- Try cinnamon instead of allspice

Black Bean Protein Balls



Ingredients

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1 cup rolled oats | 1/3 cup almond butter |
| 1 cup cooked or canned (drained and rinsed) black beans | 1/4 cup honey |
| 1/3 cup protein powder of choice | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 1/3 cup cocoa powder | 1 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1/4 cup dried coconut flakes | |

Directions

Pulverize oats in a food processor into the texture of coarse sand. Place remaining ingredients in the container and blend until the mixture sticks together.

Roll mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get 16 balls.

Switch Hits

- Use peanut, cashew or sunflower butter instead of almond
- Swap out honey for brown rice syrup or date syrup
- Switch out the coconut for ground flax

Cookie Dough Balls



Ingredients

1 (14 oz) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1/3 cup peanut butter or almond butter
1/4 cup maple syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 cup mini chocolate chips

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Pat chickpeas dry with paper towel, spread out on a baking sheet and roast for 15 minutes, stirring once halfway through cooking time. Let chickpeas cool for several minutes.

Place chickpeas, nut butter, maple syrup, vanilla, cinnamon and a pinch of salt in a food processor container and blend until mixture becomes creamy and starts to clump together, wiping down sides of container as needed. Pulse in chocolate chips. Using slightly damp hands, roll mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get about 14 balls.

PB Banana Balls



Ingredients

- 1 cup pitted dates
- 1 cup baked crunchy banana chips
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 2/3 cup peanut butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Directions

Place dates in a bowl, cover with warm water and let soak 30 minutes. Drain and pat away excess liquid with a paper towel.

Place banana chips and oats in a food processor container and blend until mixture is pulverized. Add drained dates, peanut butter, vanilla and cinnamon; blend until mixture sticks together when pressed between your fingers. Form into 1-inch balls. You should get about 14 balls.

Switch Hits

- Swap out oats for other grain flakes like quinoa
- Use soaked figs instead of dates
- Blend in almond butter to replace peanut butter

Berry Chocolate Balls



Ingredients

- 1 cup pitted dates
- 3/4 cup almonds
- 3/4 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup freeze-dried strawberries or raspberries
- 1/4 cup hemp seeds (hemp hearts)
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Soak dates in hot water for 30 minutes. Drain and pat away excess moisture with a paper towel.

Place oats, almonds and freeze-dried berries in a food processor container and blend until finely chopped. Add dates to container along with hemp seeds, cocoa, honey, vanilla, cinnamon and salt. Blend until mixture clumps together. Roll mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get about 18 balls.

Switch Hits

- Swap out almonds for walnuts
- Use shelled sunflower seeds instead of hemp seeds
- Try quinoa flakes instead of oats

Sesame Crusted Pistachio Balls



Ingredients

3/4 cup shelled pistachios
1 cup dried apricots
1/3 cup dried shredded coconut
2 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon ginger powder

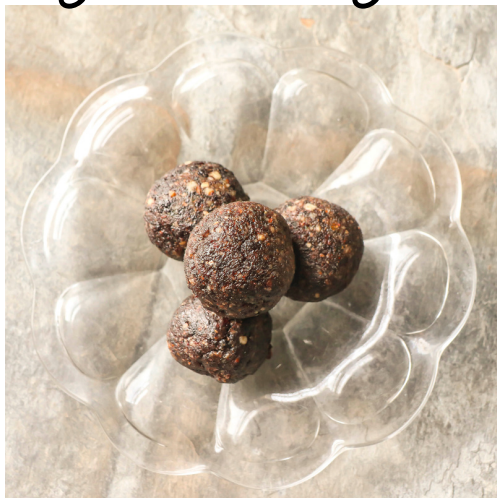
Juice of 1/2 orange
1/8 teaspoon salt (omit if
using salted pistachios)
3 tablespoons sesame
seeds

Directions

Place pistachios in a food processor container and grind until the texture of coarse sand. Add apricots, coconut, honey, ginger, orange juice and salt; blend until mixture clumps together.

Form into 1-inch balls. You should get about 12 balls. Place sesame seeds on a plate and roll balls in seeds to coat. Add more sesame seeds to plate if needed.

Minty Blueberry Balls



Ingredients

1/2 cup dried dates

1 cup unsalted almonds

3/4 cup dried blueberries

1/4 cup fresh mint

2 teaspoons lemon zest

1/8 teaspoon almond
extract (optional)

1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Soak dates in hot water for 30 minutes. Drain well and pat excess moisture away with a paper towel.

Place almonds in a food processor container and blend into the size of coarse sand. Add dates, dried blueberries, mint, lemon zest, almond extract if using and salt to container and blend until mixture clumps together and blueberries are mashed. Roll mixture into 1-inch sized balls. You should get 10 balls.

Switch Hits

- Flavor with orange zest instead of lemon
- Use walnuts instead of almonds
- Blend in dried cherries instead of blueberries

Limey Mango Balls



Ingredients

1 cup pitted dates
1 1/2 cups unsalted roasted cashews
1 1/2 cups dried mango
1/3 cup dried shredded coconut
1/4 cup chia seeds

Zest of 1 lime
Juice of 1/2 lime
1 teaspoon ginger powder
1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Place dates in a bowl, cover with hot water and let soak 30 minutes. Drain and pat away excess liquid with a paper towel.

Place cashews in a food processor container and blend into the texture of coarse sand. Add remaining ingredients and blend until mixture sticks together when pressed between fingers. Roll mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get about 20 balls.

Switch Hits

- Replace lime with orange or lemon
- Use dried pineapple instead of mango
- Splurge for macadamia nuts in replace of cashews

Orange-Scented Chocolate Tahini Balls



Ingredients

1 cup pitted dates

1/3 cup cocoa powder

1/4 cup tahini

Zest of 1 orange

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 tablespoons sesame seeds

Directions

Place dates in a bowl and soak in warm water for 30 minutes. Drain and pat away excess moisture with a paper towel.

Place all of the ingredients except for the sesame seeds in a food processor container and blend until mixture sticks together when pinched between fingers. Roll mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get about 10 balls. Spread sesame seeds out on a plate. Roll balls in sesame seeds, adding more seeds to plate as needed.

Switch Hits

- Try prunes (dried plums) or soaked dried figs in place of dates
- Roll the balls in hemp seeds instead of sesame seeds
- Add lemon zest instead of orange

Sweet Potato Pie Balls



Ingredients

1 cup pecans	Zest of 1 orange
3/4 cup rolled oats	1 teaspoon allspice
1/2 cup pitted dates	1 teaspoon ginger powder
1 small peeled and cooked sweet potato	1/3 cup dried shredded coconut
2 tablespoons ground flaxseed	1/8 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup honey	

Directions

Place pecans, oats and dates in a food processor container and process until finely chopped. Add sweet potato, flaxseed, honey, orange zest, allspice, ginger powder and salt to container and blend until mixture clumps together.

Form mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get about 16 balls. Spread coconut out on a plate. Roll balls in coconut and chill in refrigerator to help the balls firm up.

Switch Hits

- Blend in lemon zest instead of orange
- Use ground chia seeds in replace of flax
- Swap pecans for walnuts

Curry Apricot Balls



Ingredients

1 1/2 cups unsalted cashews
2 cups dried apricots
1/2 cup dried unsweetened coconut flakes
1/4 cup hemp seeds (hemp hearts)
2 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

2 teaspoons grated or finely minced fresh ginger
1 1/2 teaspoons yellow curry powder
1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Place cashews in a food processor and process until finely chopped. Add apricots, coconut, honey, lime juice, ginger, curry powder and salt. Process until mixture clumps together. Using moist hands, form the mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get about 24 balls.

Switch Hits

- Replace hemp seeds with sesame seeds
- Swap out lime juice for lemon juice
- Use brown rice syrup or agave syrup instead of honey

Red Velvet Balls



Ingredients

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 cup pitted dates | 3 tablespoons honey |
| 3/4 cup rolled oats | Zest of 1 orange (optional) |
| 2/3 cup almonds | 1 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1 medium cooked beet, peeled and chopped | 1/8 teaspoon salt |
| 1/3 cup protein powder (optional) | |
| 2 tablespoons cocoa powder | |
| 1/2 cup dried coconut flakes | |
| 1/4 cup ground flaxseed | |

Directions

Place dates in a bowl, cover with hot water and let soak 30 minutes. Drain and pat away excess liquid with a paper towel.

Place oats and almonds in a food processor container and process until pulverized. Add beets, drained dates, protein powder if using, cocoa powder, coconut, flax, honey, orange zest if using, cinnamon and salt. Blend until mixture sticks together. Roll mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get about 16 balls.

Switch Hits

- Try prunes (dry plums) instead of dates
- Swap out almonds for walnuts
- Replace flax with hemp seeds

Figgy Protein Balls



Ingredients

1 1/2 cup dried figs (stems trimmed)	Zest of 1 orange
1/3 cup protein powder of choice	Juice of 1/2 orange
1/4 cup cocoa powder	1/8 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup almond butter	
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon	

Directions

Soak figs in hot water for 30 minutes. Drain and pat dry away excess moisture with paper towel.

In a food processor, blend together drained figs and remaining ingredients until mixture clumps together. Form into 1-inch balls.

Switch Hits

- Swap out figs for dates
- Use peanut butter instead of almond butter
- Flavour with lemon instead of orange

Banana Bread Balls



Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups pitted dates
- 3/4 cup quick cook oats
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 1/4 cup ground flaxseed
- 1 large ripe and peeled banana
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Place dates in a food processor container and blend until they are the size of large pebbles. Add remaining ingredients and pulse machine about 10 times, until everything is well mixed but not mushy. Form mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get 12 balls.

Switch Hits

- Replace almond flour with hazelnut flour
- Try dried figs or prunes instead of dates
- Swap out oats for quinoa flakes

Miso Tahini Balls



Ingredients

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 cup rolled oats | 2 teaspoons orange zest |
| 1/2 cup dried apricots | 1 teaspoon ginger powder |
| 1/2 cup raisins | 3 tablespoons sesame seeds,
preferably a mix of black and
white |
| 1/4 cup tahini | |
| 3 tablespoons honey | |
| 2 tablespoons white miso | |

Directions

Place oats in a food processor container and pulse until they are pulverized. Add apricots, raisins, tahini, honey, miso, orange and ginger to container and blend until mixture sticks together when pressed between your fingers.

Roll mixture into 1-inch sized balls. You should get 12 balls. Spread sesame seeds out on a small plate and roll balls in seeds. Add more seeds to plate if needed.

Switch Hits

- Swap out orange zest for lemon zest
- Try prunes instead of raisins
- Use date syrup instead of honey

Aloha Matcha Balls



Ingredients

1/2 cup pitted dates	2 teaspoons matcha tea powder
1 cup unsalted cashews	1/8 teaspoon salt
1 cup dried pineapple	
1/3 cup dried shredded coconut	
1/4 cup chopped dried crystallized ginger	

Directions

Place dates in a bowl, cover with hot water and let soak 30 minutes. Drain and pat away excess moisture with a paper towel.

Place cashews in a food processor container and process until the size of coarse sand. Add drained dates, pineapple, coconut, ginger and salt to container and blend until mixture clumps together. Roll mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get about 14 balls.

Switch Hits

- Swap out pineapple for dried mango
- Use macadamia nuts in replace of cashews
- Flavor with lime zest instead of ginger

Buttertart Balls



Ingredients

1/2 cup dates

1 cup rolled oats

3/4 cup pecans

1/2 cup raisins

3 tablespoons cashew butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Place dates in a bowl, cover with hot water and let soak 30 minutes. Drain and pat away excess moisture with a paper towel. Place oats and pecans in a food processor container and process until pulverized into small pieces. Add drained dates, raisins, cashew butter, vanilla and salt; blend until the mixture clumps together. Form into 1-inch balls. You should get about 14 balls.

Switch Hits

- Swap out pecans for walnuts
- Use sunflower or almond butter instead of cashew
- Try dried currants in replace of raisins

Muesli Balls



Ingredients

2 cups muesli of choice

1 cup pitted dried plums (prunes)

1/4 cup almond butter

1/4 cup honey

2 teaspoons lemon zest

1 teaspoon allspice

1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Place all of the ingredients in a food processor container and blend until the mixture sticks together. Roll into 1-inch balls. You should get about 16 balls.

Switch Hits

- Try raisins or soaked dates instead of prunes
- Use date syrup over honey
- Blend in orange zest in replace of lemon zest
- Swap out allspice for cinnamon

Mayan Salted Truffle Balls



Ingredients

1 cup walnuts	1/4 teaspoon cayenne powder
1 cup prunes (dried plums)	1 1/2 ounces dark chocolate (about 70% cocoa), chopped
1/4 cup cocoa powder	1/2 tsp flakey salt
2 tablespoons coconut oil, melted	
1 tablespoon maple syrup or honey	
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon	

Directions

Place walnuts in a food processor container and pulse into small pieces. Add prunes, cocoa powder, coconut oil, maple syrup or honey, cinnamon and cayenne; blend until the mixture sticks together. Roll mixture into 1-inch balls. You should get 14 balls.

Microwave chocolate in a small bowl on high power in 20 second intervals, stirring between each interval, until melted. Place balls on a large plate or cutting board and drizzle with melted chocolate. Sprinkle on salt. Allow balls to chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes until chocolate has set. Don't stuff into a jersey pocket!

About the Author



Matthew Kadey is a registered dietitian, nutrition writer and professional recipe developer. And, of course, an energy ball aficionado. Find more recipes to fuel an active lifestyle in his book *Rocket Fuel: Power Packed Food for Sports + Adventure*. He is also a bicycle route developer with routes in Ontario, Costa Rica and Colombia. Find him at www.matthewkadey.com and www.bt700.ca