

Papa  
loves!



I thought back to a special event I attended a few weeks ago for Seattle-area health bloggers. It was hosted by Whole Foods, and we had a private cooking demo from WF's Executive Chef, Chad Sarno – as well as a great discussion about healthy cooking, particularly for kids. One of the things he stressed was reducing the amount of refined sugar our diets, and he suggested the use of things like dried fruit as natural sweeteners.

It's something I've been thinking about a lot lately, especially as I watch Cullen shove food into his mouth faster and faster. I feel comfortable that we already have pretty healthy eating habits, but I know there is always room for improvement. I'd like to stop spending money on things like Clif Bars – things that have a lot of extra ingredients and wasteful packaging – and start making more things like this to keep on hand.

### Coconut Date Energy Bites



by Emily Malone

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

#### Ingredients (12-14 balls)

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup unsweetened dried coconut
- 1/2 cup roasted pumpkin seeds
- 12 pitted dates, chopped
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup water (you might not need quite this much!)
- zest of one orange
- pinch of salt
- extra coconut for rolling (optional)

#### Instructions

Honestly, it doesn't get much more simple than this. Make sure your dates are pitted, and then chop them into bite sized pieces.



Add dates, oats, coconut, vanilla, salt, and pepitas to a food processor. Zest one orange over top of the food processor, and then let it spin. The mixture will be dry and crumbly – let it process for a minute just to break down some of the bigger ingredients.

Slowly add about 1/4 cup of water – add just until the mixture becomes wet and a bit sticky. Scoop out tablespoon sized portions and roll into balls. They will have a bit of stickiness to them, so I like to roll them in dried coconut to help prevent them from sticking together.



These can be eaten at room temp, but I prefer them cooled in the refrigerator. Pack for snacks, hikes, bike rides, or any other long day where you might need a quick boost.

We ate ours [at the top of a mountain](#) after a long climb, and we stopped along the way for snacks and water a few times. I offered some of the bites to our friends, who happily accepted. As we continued to hike, [Kelsey](#) asked me two times exactly what went into the snacks, so I took it as a good sign that they were a hit.



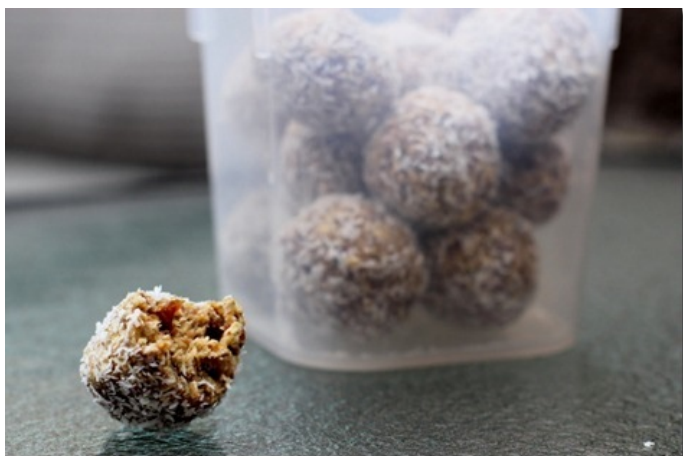
My fitness level has been subpar at best lately, but I'm hoping that changes soon. These bites are certainly motivating me to get back to my old training days. I think these would be perfect as pre-run fuel, or great to take along on a long bike ride.



I'm also planning to make a batch or two of these each weekend for Casey to take to work the next week – a good pick-me-up in the middle of the workday, and much healthier than the dense sugar-bombs that often lurk in office breakrooms.



There are a million variations you can make with these, and I plan to test out as many as possible. This particular recipe clocks in at about 125 calories per bite. It might sound like a lot, but the idea is that it is a small, dense snack – good for filling and fueling. I have a gigantic appetite (and sweet tooth), and I was surprised to find that just two of these was more than satiating.



As always, enjoy!

Powered by [Recipage](#)

**You might also like:**



Running Forward.



My Running Roller-Coaster.



Racing Forward.