

NANA'S APRICOT BARS

½ pound dried apricots, chopped
¾ cup sugar
¾ cup water
½ teaspoon lemon or orange zest, optional
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1¼ cups oatmeal
1¼ cups flour
1 cup brown sugar, packed
1 teaspoon baking soda
4 ounces unsalted butter, melted, plus extra for pan

Preheat oven to 325°.

Mix apricots, sugar, water, zest and lemon juice in a heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 5–10 minutes until syrupy. Stir occasionally. Cool.

Mix oatmeal, flour, sugar and baking soda until well blended. Stir in the melted butter and mix well.

Pat ⅔ of the mixture into a lightly greased 9" x 13" pan. Press firmly and evenly in place. Spread the apricot mixture evenly on top of the mixture. Top with remaining oat mixture. Press down lightly.

Bake for 30–40 minutes until lightly browned. Cool and cut into squares.

Yield: 16–20 bars

“A special treat for Dyke and me was helping my grandmother with the saccharin in her tea. Each week, one of us was allowed to get up from our seat, take two little pills out of a tiny enamel pill box with an attached lid, which was always next to her tea cup, put them into her tea, and watch them dissolve.”

—MARGARET GAMBLE MESSLER WINSLOW

CHOCOLATE CHUNK OATMEAL COCONUT COOKIES

2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for cookie sheets
1 cup packed brown sugar
6 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1½ teaspoons vanilla
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup all-purpose flour
2¼ cups old-fashioned oats
1½ cups packed finely shredded unsweetened coconut
12 ounces semisweet or bittersweet packaged chocolate chunks
¾ cup almonds with skins (4 ounces), toasted

Preheat oven to 375°.

Beat together butter and sugars in a bowl with an electric mixer at high speed until fluffy. Add eggs and beat until just blended. Beat in vanilla, baking soda and salt. Add flour and mix at low speed until just blended. Stir in oats, coconut, chocolate and almonds.

Arrange ¼ cup mounds of cookie dough about 3 apart on 2 lightly buttered large baking sheets (about 8 cookies per sheet), then gently pat down each mound to about ½" thick. Bake in upper and lower thirds of oven, switching position and rotating pans halfway through baking, until golden, 15–18 minutes total.

Cool cookies on sheets 1 minute. Transfer with a spatula to racks to cool completely.

Repeat until batter is finished.

Yield: 20–24 large cookies