

Hiking For Her's Energy Spheres – Great Trail Snack!

In your food processor, grind up a **cup of your favorite nuts** (almonds work well). Be sure they're raw (not roasted or salted or flavored). Don't let them grind to mush, but make sure they're in fairly tiny pieces so they'll go down easy on the trail.

Then add a **cup of pitted dates** (Medjool). I buy mine at a local food coop in small quantities because if they're dried out, your spheres will be less tasty. If you purchase pitted, de-pit!!

Along with the dates, add a **pinch of cinnamon, cardamom, or other favorite baking spice**. I prefer just cinnamon and cardamom, but I'm sure ginger, allspice, maybe a bit of cloves would be good if you like strong flavors.

If you don't have a full cup of dates in your cupboard, you can add something else with a soft chewy texture. My top pick would be raisins (always go organic on those, because grapes are heavily sprayed with nasty pesticides). Unsulfured apricots (they aren't the plump orange ones; more shriveled and dark but again, you're avoiding chemical insults) are also yummy.

Process the dried fruit along with the ground nuts for a minute or two, until the nut/fruit mixture begins to fall away from the sides of the container.

Now it's time to add about one-half to one-third of a cup of **nut butter**. Use your favorite, and be sure it's the good stuff. You don't want artificial flavors or preservatives, or added hydrogenated fats, to slow you down. Currently my favorite is almond butter, but I've been known to use cashew and peanut butter, too.

A note about the nut butters: I've tried roasted and raw, and I prefer roasted nut butter because it imparts a richer flavor. Again, experiment until you satisfy your own taste buds. And since you're going to be working up a sweat, added salt might not be a bad idea. So I'll go with recommending **salted, roasted nut butters**.

Now for the fun part! Take off your rings to avoid getting this stuff stuck in hard to clean places. Carefully remove the *wickedly sharp* food processor blade (ask me how I know).

With clean hands, roll some of this yummy concoction in your hands until a ball forms. The size of the ball is up to you. I try for the size of a large cherry tomato.

If you want to be super fancy, roll each ball in some unsweetened shredded coconut, or press a whole nut into the top. A high quality cocoa (a renowned antioxidant) powder might be a good idea, too, for variety.

These spheres are DEE-licious when they're fresh, but after about 5 days they begin to lose their soft texture and the flavor begins to slip. I keep them in an airtight container on the kitchen counter and we have no problem making sure they're gone within 5 days.

They travel well in a ziplock bag, too – although at the bottom of my backpack they lose their sphericity. Then we call them energy discs. 😊

Enjoy!!

-Diane Spicer www.hiking-for-her.com