

Crispy Cat Organic Candy Bars (Vegan, Gluten-Free)

We have seen a surge of organic candy on the market recently, yet when I viewed the news of "Crispy Cat: The World's First Organic Candy Bar" I realized it was true. Of all the obscure organic pursuits, no one had yet tackled the candy bar. This first in class also won Tree Huggin's Treats, the creators of Crispy Cat, a "Best of Show" award at this year's Expo West Natural Food Trade Show; an enormous presentation of roughly 2500 companies, each vying for the public's attention.

Well, Tree Huggin's Treats got my attention at the very least. All natural, vegan, and a candy bar; how could I possibly overlook such a combination? Of course, I had to sample all three flavors to compare, one would simply not do! With three brightly colored candy bar wrappers tempting me, I opted to share each with my husband (taste tester #2) so that I could trial all as quickly as possible, without gorging myself to the point of candy bar repulsion. Mint Coconut

Easily two of my favorite flavors, but how would they taste together? It was certainly a unique combination that until this point I had never stumbled upon. With curiosity eating away at me, this was obviously the first selection I dove into.

The bar was a bit more petite than my memories of candy bars. However, my husband had recently complained of the shrinking size of some old favorites, so this may be industry standard now. As I broke the bar in two, a somewhat hearty texture emerged. Upon first bite, both my husband and I confirmed that this was more substantial than your average Mars or Hershey's brand. It was rich with coconut and had a somewhat oat-like feel, though oats are nowhere to be found on the ingredient list. I believe this came from the brown rice crisps, which didn't exude the "crispy" experience I had expected.

The mint flavor is quite potent, but not overpowering. It left a cooling sensation in my mouth long after my last bite. We both loved this refreshing and lingering taste. Surprisingly, the coconut and mint combination really worked.

The chocolate layer is thin and dark, but it adds an element of interest and gives this treat its candy-bar likeness. Toasted Almond

The Toasted Almond had the nutty flair of a candy bar, but in taste, texture, and appearance, it had a dense granola bar type image. True, it was tasty, and the chocolate coating added nicely to the flavor. I quite enjoyed the taste. Each bite melded into a nutty-caramel flavor.

The almonds are finely chopped, and bound with brown rice crisps and brown rice syrup for a very dense and chewy experience. In and of themselves, the crisps served more as a background, rarely stating their presence.

Overall, I would say the Toasted Almond almost had the essence of a Snickers bar, but blended into more of granola bar presentation. Though I really enjoyed it, this Crispy Cat veered a bit far from the pure candy bar experience. Certainly a worthwhile food, but it doesn't quite have that "good" guilt feeling that comes with the sugar and fat injection of a candy bar. Roasted Peanut

The Peanut Crispy Cat was the most granola bar-like of the bunch. It was a distinct cross between a peanut butter Snickers (is there such a thing?) and a chocolate coated granola bar, but perhaps with even a healthier flair.

Like the Toasted Almond, I enjoyed the faux caramel flavor that seemed to penetrate this bar. Big chunks of peanuts were generously interspersed among the rice crispy filling, which is actually quite soft and forgiving. We both noted the hearty, yet very sweet, aftertaste. This one almost filled my sweet tooth cravings, but not quite. It is still a bit too healthy. Though I did only acquire a half of the bar, sharing the other half with my taste-testing partner. Perhaps a full bar would have satisfied me completely.

Though I wouldn't turn down any product from Tree Huggin's Treats if offered to me again, the Mint Coconut Crispy Cat earned our top honors. I do confess, each Crispy Cat flavor errs on the granola bar side rather than pure candy bar indulgence. But, whom am I kidding? Most "bars", whether labeled as energy, granola, or snack, are simply glorified candy bars. Crispy Cat bridges this gap nicely.

My Extra Notes & Tips

- Compared to your average candy bar, these are respectable in both fat and sugars. Just 9 to 11g of fat for the entire bar, and 14g of sugar, lower than many cereals!
- Yes, Crispy Cats are vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free, non-GMO, and of course organic (70% to 92%) and all natural. Lecithin is the only soy ingredient.
- The weather was quite hot when I discovered my Crispy Cat's, so your bars may appear more picture perfect than mine, which had melted ever-so-slightly; with no sacrifice in taste of course! See Janelle's review for a prettier view of the chocolate exterior.

Where to Purchase: I have a feeling these will be in every grocery store across the country soon. But, if you can't find it, the Tree Huggin's Treats online store is scheduled to be open for business in June 2007.