

Simbree Grain & Nut Granola (Egg-Free, Wheat-Free)

My first trial began with a slight misunderstanding. The label states Granola, so I poured a bowl, topped it with some almond milk, and dove in. However, it seems this product is intended as more of a Muesli than a Granola. As I sat noshing on my hearty breakfast, I grabbed the package to read the label as I always do. Huh, granola with cooking instructions? Yes, it the people at Simbree recommend that you boil or microwave this cereal in water for just a couple of minutes.

Honestly, I really liked it raw. Granted, my digestive system is probably getting a really good workout, but I love all things grainy and nutty. I guess you could call me a "granola" when it comes to food choices sometimes.

The granola appeared to be lightly baked (hence a short cooking time) and was filled to the brim with a mix of organic rolled oats, ground soybeans, oat bran, and a generous mix of nuts and seeds (organic sesame, pumpkin, sunflower, almond, pistachio). This is definitely a mix I would love to have in my pack when heading out for a long hike.

Though wild blackberry honey was on the ingredient list, I didn't detect a single note of sweetness in this hearty granola. For some reason it seems very hard to find a quick and filling breakfast that is void of sugar, so I was pleased with the 6g of sugar, and more savory taste. I took the low sugar take one step further, serving it up with unsweetened almond milk, but this is an excellent granola for original milk alternatives, which tend to taste a bit sweet themselves. In my opinion this mix had so much flavor on its own, that sugar really wasn't required. Nonetheless, you could easily add a teaspoon of sweetener or a handful of dried fruit if desired.

Now, wanting to trial every product in its intended form, I followed the directions the following morning, and sampled a warm bowl of cereal. True, the quick boiling did make for more chewable oats. Yet, my preference was to half the cooking time for a soft, yet grainy product. The granola easily took on a nut spiked oatmeal image when cooked as instructed. It was excellent this way as well, retaining its flavor, while changing primarily in texture.

I think raw or cooked would merely be a matter of preference or convenience (I don't usually have a microwave on hand when out on a hike). Since the hot days of summer are upon us, I will likely be go raw with this batch, but Simbree's granola would be an awesome cereal to have on hand when the weather chills off.

Though my shipment included just the one granola (and all of the other goodies pictured!), Simbree granola comes in two other flavors Maple Walnut and Cherry Berry, the latter being nut-free and loaded with dried cherries and blueberries.

My Extra Notes & Tips:

- This is a filling cereal. I usually scoff at any granola labeled with ½ cup serving size, but I was stuffed with just one Simbree serving
- Simbree uses all non-GMO ingredients (soybeans, expeller pressed canola oil)
- Due to the nuts, this granola is slightly high in fat 11g, but as many doctors will tell us now, this is "good" fat. As an added bonus, this granola is loaded with 9g of protein and half of the daily RDI for iron.
- The packaging is a perfectly easy-to-open (yeah!), re-sealable, easy-to-scoop tub that can be re-used.

Where to Purchase: Simbree snacks can be purchased directly from Simbree in their online store. In store, Simbree products are working their way from West to East within the U.S. and it looks as though they have Canadian ambitions. See their website for a store locator map.