

## Blueberry Picnic Bars (Vegan, Nut-Free)

Two summers ago when my husband and I lived in British Columbia, I was spoiled by the bountiful supply of inexpensive blueberries. Our local farmer's market store, just a pleasant stroll away, was literally clearing them out for just \$1.99 a pound! Needless to say, we stocked up. I believe I dedicated an entire afternoon to properly cleaning and freezing pounds of those little blue delicacies.

With a freezer full and a few pounds left to go, it was time to start eating! Beyond our morning smoothies, a little treat seemed in order. So, I called upon this recipe for Blueberry Bars, which was originally discovered in an issue of Woman's Day. Since my first trial, I have played around with the recipe, attempting to make it a bit "healthier." Though whole wheat flour was successful, I have yet to find any other modifications that improved upon this simple and tasty, original recipe:

### Base and Topping:

1 1/2 cup uncooked oats  
1/2 cup flour  
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
6 tablespoons unsalted margarine -- melted

### Filling:

1 1/2 cup blueberries -- rinsed and drained  
3 tablespoons sugar  
2 teaspoons cornstarch  
1 teaspoon lemon juice

### Directions:

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and grease an 8" square baking pan.

In a large bowl, mix the oats, flour, brown sugar, baking soda and salt. Add the melted margarine and stir with a fork until evenly moistened (mixture will be crumbly). Reserve 1/2 cup of the crumb mixture for topping. Press the remaining mixture evenly and firmly over bottom of your prepared pan.

Bake for 12 minutes to set crust.

In a small saucepan stir the berries, sugar, cornstarch and lemon juice over medium heat until it comes to a simmer. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the juices are no longer cloudy, about 2 minutes. Spoon the filling over the crust.

Crumble the reserved crumb mixture over top.

Bake for 30 minutes. Let cool completely in the pan. Cut into squares and enjoy!