Recipe: Carrot Cake Energy Bites

INGREDIENTS
1 cup pitted dates
1/2 cup old fashioned rolled oats
1/4 cup chopped pecans
1/4 cup chia seeds
2 medium carrots, finely chopped or shredded
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
1/4 teaspoon salt
Pinch of ground black pepper

METHOD
1. Combine dates, oats, pecans, and chia seeds in a food processor and pulse until well combined.
2. Add carrots, vanilla, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, salt, and pepper; process until all ingredients are well combined and paste begins to form.
3. Roll the mixture into balls using a scant 1 Tbsp. each.

Makes 4 servings

Recipe adapted from EatingWell.com
Portable Picnic Meals
How to make the 4 basic meal components healthy and portable!

**STARCH (CARBOHYDRATES)**

Whole grain pita pockets are great for portability!

Watch out for wrap breads…to get enough wrap to “tuck in” your sandwich innards, you may have to use a large one, and end up with a lot of calories from the wrap.

Salads with some whole grain or potato (white or sweet) work fine, too. Just put them in a leak-proof container.

**PROTEIN**

If you’re going to be out all day with no way to keep something cold, best to go for non-animal proteins, like nuts or nut butters. Make your own trail mix with a variety of nuts and dried fruit. If it’s for just a few hours, or you can bring an insulated bag and/or cold pack, then you can add more variety. Hummus or spiced up re-fried beans with some grated cheese go great in a pita or on a green salad. Cottage cheese, yogurt or hard boiled eggs are great portable protein sources.

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

Try some roasted peppers, spinach, or olives on your sandwich, to add some yum, along with extra vitamin C, potassium, and healthy fats. Of course, good old lettuce and tomato work fine, too.

Fruit or veggies can be a great substitute for bread. You can use them to dip into peanut butter, cottage cheese, hummus, salsa, bean dips, etc. All very packable.

**FATS**

You need some to keep you feeling full, and to get healthy fatty acids. A lot of the foods just mentioned come with their own fat: nuts, hummus, and cheese all have plenty…no need to add any. Get low fat (not fat free) cottage cheese or yogurt. 2% plain yogurt (Trader Joe’s and Fage both make a 2% plain) tastes fabulously rich, is filling, fermented, and is a great protein source. Drizzle packed salads with a little good quality olive oil, or pack it separately in a small container.

**WATER**

Don’t forget to hydrate!

Enjoy your hike, walk or bike ride and your delicious picnic.
## Introduction to Food Safety

### How to keep portable picnic foods safe!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before preparing food</td>
<td>Wash meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rinse whole fruits and vegetables under running water and dry with a clean cloth, paper towel, or salad spinner</td>
<td>Use soap or detergent on foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash utensils that have touched uncooked meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or flour before using them with any food that will be eaten raw</td>
<td>Allow raw meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or flour to touch any food that will be eaten raw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean cooking surfaces and utensils with hot, soapy water after every use</td>
<td>Reuse plates or cutting boards that have touched uncooked meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or flour unless you wash them first with hot, soapy water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook meat, poultry, and seafood to a safe minimum internal temperature</td>
<td>Serve cooked meat, poultry, or seafood without checking the temperature with a food thermometer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Beef, pork, veal, & lamb (chops, roasts, steaks):** 145°F with a 3-minute rest time

**Poultry:** 165°F

**Ground meats:** 160°F

**Fish & seafood:** 145°F

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<td>Keep meat, poultry, and seafood warm (140°F or above) between cooking and serving</td>
<td>Allow food to cool before refrigerating</td>
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<td>Use the USDA FoodKeeper App to check how long foods can be safely stored</td>
<td>Let food sit out for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour in air temperatures above 90°F</td>
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### 1. Prepare at Home

- Defrost meat, poultry, and seafood in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave should be cooled immediately.
- Don’t reuse marinade that touched raw food unless you boil it first.
- Wash all produce before eating, even if you plan to peel it.

### 2. Pack Your Cooler Correctly

- Pack your cooler with lots of ice or ice packs and make sure it is 40°F or below.
- Pack raw meat, poultry, and seafood in a separate cooler from food that is already cooked or ready-to-eat, such as beverages and produce.
- Load coolers into the passenger compartment of the car, which is typically cooler than the trunk.

### 3. Keep It Clean

- Wash your hands with water and soap before and after handling food.
- If you don’t have access to running water, use a water bottle, some soap, and paper towels, or consider using moist disposable wipes for cleaning your hands.
- Never use the same platter and utensils for cooked food that were used for raw meat, poultry, or seafood.

### 4. Cook Foods Thoroughly

- Cook meat, poultry, and seafood to a safe internal temperature — always use a food thermometer to be sure!
- Cook hamburgers to an internal temperature of 160°F. Chicken and turkey (including ground) to 165°F, and steaks, chops, and fish to 145°F.

### 5. Watch Your Time

- Don’t let hot or cold food sit in the “danger zone” (between 40°F and 140°F) for more than 2 hours — or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is above 90°F.
- Keep coolers out of direct sun when outside and keep them closed as much as possible.