

TOASTED NUT AND SILAN SQUARES



Makes 16 (2-inch) squares

1 cup walnuts or pecans

For the crust:

½ cup whole wheat flour

½ cup all-purpose flour

½ cup (1 stick) cold butter, cut into ¼- to ½-inch pieces

3 tablespoons sugar

¼ tsp salt

For the filling:

½ cup homemade or good-quality store-bought silan

2 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces

1 tablespoon water

1 teaspoon lemon juice

Pinch salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place nuts on sheet pan and toast in oven until fragrant and lightly browned, 7 to 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Make the crust. In a mixing bowl, toss together the flours, sugar, salt, and butter. Using your fingers or a pastry cutter, crumble the ingredients together to the texture of coarse cornmeal. Pour mixture into 8-inch-square pan and gently press evenly over bottom and partway up the sides of the pan, giving extra attention to where the bottom meets the side of pan to keep thickness even. Bake until light golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from oven and gently smooth the crust with the back of a soup spoon to seal any cracks, pushing gently along sides if crust has slumped during baking.

While the crust is baking, prepare filling. Place silan, butter, water, lemon, and pinch of salt into heatproof or microwavable bowl (I like to use a 1-qt glass liquid measuring cup). Heat in microwave just until butter melts, 30 to 45 seconds, or in a pot of simmering water just until butter melts. Stir to blend.

Chop nuts and stir them and any “nut dust” into silan mixture. Pour filling evenly over crust. Return pan to oven and bake until edges of crust are golden brown and filling is bubbling and thickened, about 20 minutes. Filling will continue to set as it cools. Cool several hours or overnight before cutting into squares. Store covered at room temperature up to four days and refrigerate up to six.