



CARA - ESSENTIAL - BRISTOL

I have been a pyrotechnician, working in outdoor events for over 15 years, which has all been halted by Covid. I started studying Nutrition in 2019 and was lucky enough on the first day of lockdown to find a new job at Essential which was flexible and still allowed me to continue my studies.

I lasted a day in manufacturing before joining the transport team and getting out on the road. This has been a major benefit to my mental health as someone who grew up on the road. It's been vital for me to get out and about during the national lock downs meeting new people and interacting with customers who have been amazingly patient, supportive and kind in the challenges I have come across while

out on my deliveries, developing my skills as lorry driver.

I feel very privileged and thankful to the team at Essential to have had this opportunity and admire those who have worked so hard over the last half a century to overcome the ongoing challenges which are faced in the day to day running of the co-op. I hope to use the knowledge I am developing in Nutrition to give back to Essential in the future as well as the wider community.

Essential

Overnight Oats

20g Chia seeds
 30g Oats or Toasted Quinoa Flakes for a Gluten Free option
 40g Mixed Nuts of your choice
 1tsp Cacao powder
 1tsp Cinnamon
 ½ tsp Ginger
 4 Dried Apricots
 250ml plant based milk of your choice.
 A little agave/maple syrup/coconut blossom sugar to sweeten if desired

You'll need scales, a jug, a knife and a 500g Jar (I use a recycled Pama sauerkraut jar which has become my reliable favourite as it never leaks. Pama sauerkraut is also amazing and from wonderful people. I have had the privilege of meeting on my rounds. One of my favourite places to go as they always have wonderful new products for me to try)

Chop the nuts and apricots into chunks.

Place jar on scale and add cinnamon, cacao, ginger chia, oats, nuts and apricots (I zero the scale after each ingredient so I do not need to pre weigh anything).

Place the lid on the jar and shake to mix all the dry ingredients.

Remove lid add the milk and give it a good stir to ensure no chia seeds are stuck to the base of the jar. Add the sweetener here if using but maybe give it a go without at first you might be pleasantly surprised.

Place in the fridge and leave overnight to grab in the morning.

Variations:

Dried apricots are my go to as they are easily stored, are very nutritious and contain less sugar than most other dried fruits. In the autumn I use half a grated apple or pear with some fresh ginger for extra warmth. In the summer it's great to add in fresh berries to get some antioxidants and extra vitamins. Another great addition is frozen sour cherries which create a black forest version which is particularly good. I also occasionally chuck on a good spoonful of Coyo before I leave in the morning.

Sometimes I make two jars up at once if I have a couple of long days and know I may be lacking enthusiasm the following night when I get in from work.

I find this an excellent way to stop me from binging on pastries while on my rounds and keeps my eating habits healthy throughout the day, this is due to the high nutrient, protein and fibre content, balancing my blood sugar preventing energy dips and keeping me satiated. As I normally leave the house at 5am I can find somewhere nice on my rounds to stop and mindfully eat my breakfast on my first tacho break.

Patka from Pama Sauerkraut - one of the small businesses Cara meets on her delivery rounds

