

## Protein Power Energy Balls: Gluten-Free & Dairy-Free

Craving something a little sweeter? Bust through brain fog with these delicious Protein Power Energy Balls.

**Recipe:** Makes one dozen ¾" balls

**Prep Time:** 15 min

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup pitted dates
- ¼ cup or about 10 Brazil nuts
- 3 tablespoons sugar-free or low sugar peanut butter or any nut butter of your choice
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 2/3 cup gluten-free oats
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ cup cacao nibs
- 1 tablespoon real maple syrup (optional)



### Instructions:

1. In food processor, pulse pitted dates until they begin to form a ball and are in small pieces.
2. Add in Brazil nuts, peanut or other nut butter, chia seeds, oats, cinnamon and sea salt (and optional maple syrup). Pulse until very small pieces form and it holds together, but don't over process to a paste.
3. Use your hands to roll into small ¾" balls.
4. Pulse the cacao nibs in food processor until they are broken into fine pieces; roll balls in crushed cacao nibs to coat.
5. Refrigerate and enjoy!



**Why this snack may be helpful:** A handful of Brazil nuts can contain more than your total daily recommended value of selenium. This is important because studies have shown that selenium aids in the production of active thyroid hormones. If you have a sluggish or underactive thyroid, this extra dose of selenium may help.<sup>7</sup> Brazil nuts also provide zinc, which is another key nutrient for your thyroid health. One study showed the relationship between zinc deficiency and hypothyroidism along with hair loss.<sup>8</sup> If thin hair and weak nails have you down, then this boost of zinc and selenium may help.

**REFERENCES:** 1. US Dept of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements) 2. Zimmermann, M. B., & Boelaert, K. 2015, April. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25591468>. 3. US Dept of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements) <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Iodine-Consumer/>. 4. Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases Research Center, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran. 2017 May;127:1-9. doi: 10.1016/j.diabres.2017.01.021. Epub 2017 Mar 2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28292654>. 5. Carol S. Johnston, PHD, Cindy M. Kim, MS and Amanda J. Buller, MS, Department of Nutrition, Arizona State University, Mesa, Arizona Diabetes Care 2004 Jan; 27(1): 281-282. <https://doi.org/10.2337/diacare.27.1.281>. 6. Modulation of Gut Microbiota–Brain Axis by Probiotics, Prebiotics, and Diet – Xiaofei Liu, Shangqing Cao, and Xuewu Zhang, Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry 2015 63 (36), 7885–7895 DOI: 10.1021/acs.jafc.5b02404. 7. Rayman, M. P. 2000, July 15 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10963212>. 8. Betsy, A., Binitha, M., & Sarita, S. 2013 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3746228/>. 9. Jonathan D. Buckley, Peter R. C. Howe, 2010 Dec 9. doi: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3257626/>. 10. Martínez-Cruz O1, Paredes-López O2. 2014 Jun 13;1346:43-8. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24811150>. 11. Hsu JM, Root AW, Duckett GE, Smith JC Jr, Yunice AA, Kepford G. *J Nutr*. 1984 Aug;114(8):1510-7. PubMed PMID: 6747732. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/6747732>