Steel-Cut Oatmeal Heaven

Ingredients:
1 cup steel-cut oats*
3 cups water
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon butter
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup snipped dried apples or dried apricots
2 tablespoons dried cherries, raisins or tropical fruit bits
2 3-inch sticks cinnamon
2 tablespoons miniature semisweet chocolate pieces
2 slices bacon, crisp-cooked, drained and crumbled

Directions:
1 Spread oats in a shallow baking pan. Bake, uncovered, in a 350 degree F oven for 10 minutes or until oats are lightly browned, stirring twice. Cool in pan on a wire rack.
2 In a large saucepan, bring water, sugar, butter and salt just to boiling. Stir in oats, apples, cherries and cinnamon. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes or until oats are just tender and liquid is nearly absorbed, stirring occasionally. Remove and discard cinnamon sticks. Serve oatmeal warm.