

Caramel Crumb Bars

From marissarothkopf.substack.com

Recipe adapted from Nick Malgieri's *The Modern Baker*

Yield: 1 9 x 13 x 2" pan of cookies

What You'll Need:

For the dough:

8 ounces (225 grams) butter, softened

1/2 cup (100 grams) granulated sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 1/2 cups (300 grams) all-purpose flour (Read the directions carefully. You will only add 2 1/4 cups (270 grams) flour to the butter and sugar mixture. The remaining 1/4 cup goes into the crumb topping.)

For the filling:

4 tablespoons (57 grams) butter

1 tablespoon light corn syrup or golden syrup

1/4 cup (54 grams) dark brown sugar, packed

1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk

What You'll Do

1. Heat the oven to 350 °F. Butter the 13 x 9 x 2 pan. Line the bottom and sides with parchment paper, like a sling, with paper hanging over the sides to use as handles.
2. In a hand or with a stand mixer, beat the butter, sugar and salt on medium speed, 2 to 3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl once or twice. Add the vanilla and give the mixture a quick whizz-about until blended. And yes, scrape down the sides again.
3. Beat in **ONLY 2 1/4 cups** flour on the lowest speed, mixing until smooth and the flour has been absorbed.
4. Take 3/4 of the dough and press it into the prepared pan. Refrigerate the pan for 15 minutes, or until your caramel is ready.

5. Make the crumb topping: Put the remaining 1/4 of the dough into a small mixing bowl and add the remaining 1/4 cup flour in with your fingers, so it forms 1/8" and 1/4" balls o' crumb. Set aside.
6. Make the caramel: In a medium saucepan, bring the butter, corn syrup (or golden syrup), brown sugar and condensed milk to a simmer (bubbles form at the edge of the pot), stirring occasionally. Let the mixture boil gently (bloopy, hot lava-like bubbles), stirring continuously, until the mixture starts to thicken. This may take longer than you think. Remove the pot from the heat and let the mixture cool down from molten lava levels, about 15 minutes.
7. Remove the dough from the fridge. Pour the cooled caramel filling over the dough, and with an offset spatula or the back of the spoon spread the mixture evenly (but promise me you'll get yourself a [small offset spatula](#) some time soon). Sprinkle the crumbs over the top.
8. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. The filling should be a deep caramel color and bubbling gently. The crumb should be baked through.
9. Cool in the pan until lukewarm, 15 to 20 minutes. Using the parchment paper handles, lift the slab of cookie bar out of the pan and rest it on a cutting board to cool completely. Cut into strips, squares, triangles or whatever you shapes and sizes you fancy.
10. Store them at room temperature for a day, in the fridge for 2 to 3 days, or freeze, wrapped well to prevent freezer burn, until ready to serve. Defrost before serving and let come to room temperature.