



Salted Caramel Butter Bars

INGREDIENTS

For the Crust:

1 lb. salted butter room temp
1 cup sugar
1½ cups powdered sugar
2 Tbs vanilla
4 cups AP flour

For the Filling: (or see below)

1 bag (14 oz.) caramel candies (about 50 individual caramels), unwrapped
⅓ cup milk or cream
½ teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon coarse sea salt

PREPARATION

To make the crust:

Preheat oven to 325°.

In a large bowl, combine the butter and sugars. Using mixer on medium speed, beat together until creamy. Add the vanilla and beat until combined. Sift the flour into the butter mixture and beat on low speed until a smooth soft dough forms.

Spray a 9x13 inch baking pan lightly with non-stick cooking spray. Press one-third of the dough evenly into the pan to form a bottom crust. Wrap remaining dough in plastic wrap and chill in refrigerator.

Bake crust until firm and the edges are a pale golden brown approximately 20 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack and let cool about 15 minutes.

While the bottom crust is baking and the remaining dough is chilling, make the caramel filling. Place the unwrapped caramels in a microwave-safe bowl. Add the cream. Microwave on high for 1 minute. Remove from the microwave and stir until smooth. If caramels are not completely melted, microwave on high for 30-second intervals, stirring after each interval, until smooth

Once the caramel is melted add in your ½ tsp vanilla and stir until combined.

Pour the caramel filling over the crust. If you are going to salt the caramel sprinkle it on caramel layer now.

Remove the remaining chilled dough from the refrigerator and crumble it evenly over the caramel.

Return the pan to the oven and bake until the filling is bubbly and the crumbled shortbread topping is firm and lightly golden, about 25 - 30 minutes. (it took me 38 minutes.)

Let cool before cutting into squares.

NOTES:

Author: Cookies & Cups - she adapted from Sticky, Chewy, Messy, Goey: Desserts for the Serious Sweet Tooth

Serves: 24 bars

Store airtight for up to 5 days

Home-made Caramel

(You can do this in place of the filling recipe above.)

1 can of sweetened condensed milk,

1 teaspoon vanilla

1/3 cup heavy cream

2 tablespoons butter

Pour the sweetened condensed milk in a pan. Add one teaspoon of vanilla. Cook on medium high heat whisking constantly or use your portable mixer on low to avoid burning or sticking. Cook until it starts to thicken then add about a 1/3 cup heavy cream. Cook about 10 minutes longer (keep mixing). It should continue to thicken. When it makes soft peaks add about 2 tablespoons of butter and blend in. When peaks hold for a few seconds and then smooth out... remove from heat and transfer to a glass bowl. You may need to warm to pour onto the crust.