

BROWN BUTTER MAPLE PECAN BARS

INGREDIENTS:

FOR BROWN BUTTER MAPLE COOKIE BASE:

185 g salted butter (13 tablespoons), browned to approximately 155 g
70 g granulated sugar (½ cup plus 1 teaspoon)
95 g light brown sugar (7 tablespoons, packed)
1 large egg + 1 egg yolk
35 g pure maple syrup (1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons)
20 g whole milk (1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon)
2 teaspoons LorAnn Bourbon Vanilla Bean Paste
⅓ teaspoon LorAnn Canadian Maple Super-Strength
260 g all-purpose flour (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon)
8 g cornstarch (1 tablespoon)
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon fine salt

FOR MAPLE PECAN CARAMEL TOPPING:

200 g pecans (approximately 2 cups), including 16 halves reserved for decorating
160 g pure maple syrup (⅓ cup)
100 g light brown sugar (7½ tablespoons, packed)
56 g salted butter (4 tablespoons), not browned
76 g heavy whipping cream (5 tablespoons)
¼ teaspoon LorAnn Pecan Super-Strength
Flaky sea salt, to taste



DIRECTIONS:

Prepare the Pan

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C) and line a 9 × 9-inch square baking pan with parchment paper, leaving an overhang on two opposite sides so you can lift the bars out later.

Brown the Butter and Toast the Pecans

1. Add 185 g salted butter to a light-colored skillet over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until the butter melts, foams, and the milk solids at the bottom turn golden amber and smell nutty. Immediately pour the butter into a heatproof bowl, scraping in all of the toasted milk solids. You should have approximately 155 g browned butter. Set aside to cool.
2. Add 200 g pecans to the same skillet, using the residual browned butter for flavor. Toast over medium heat, stirring, until fragrant. Transfer to a plate and cool completely. Set aside 16 attractive pecan halves for decorating, roughly chop the remaining pecans, and place the chopped pecans near the stove so they are ready for the caramel.

Make and Bake the Brown Butter Cookie Base

1. To the cooled browned butter, add 70 g granulated sugar and 95 g light brown sugar and mix until combined. Add 1 large egg, 1 large egg yolk, 35 g maple syrup, 20 g whole milk, 2 teaspoons LorAnn Bourbon Vanilla Bean Paste, and $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon LorAnn Canadian Maple Super Strength Flavor. Mix until smooth.
2. Add 260 g all-purpose flour, 8 g cornstarch, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon fine salt. Mix just until the dry ingredients disappear. The dough will be thick and soft. Press it evenly into the prepared pan, smoothing the top and filling the corners.
3. Bake at 350°F for 22 minutes. The base should be set but still soft. Do not overbake, as it continues to firm up as it cools. Place the pan on a wire rack and set it aside while you make the caramel.

Make the Maple Pecan Caramel

1. Before you begin, have the chopped pecans, the 16 pecan halves, the flaky sea salt, a heatproof spatula, and a candy thermometer within reach.
2. Combine 160 g maple syrup, 100 g light brown sugar, 56 g salted butter, 76 g heavy whipping cream, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon LorAnn Pecan Super Strength Flavor in one heavy-bottomed saucepan. Begin over very low heat and allow everything to melt together gently, stirring, until the butter is fully melted and the mixture is smooth.
3. Increase the heat to medium and bring the caramel to a boil. Cook until it reaches 230°F to 240°F (110°C to 116°C). Do not let it go above 240°F, or the caramel will become too thick and lose its glossy finish. It should stay glossy, smooth, and fluid enough to pour. Remove from the heat as soon as it reaches temperature.

Assemble, Cool, and Slice

1. Working quickly, stir the chopped toasted pecans into the hot caramel. Do not let the caramel sit before adding them.
2. Immediately spread the maple pecan caramel evenly over the baked cookie base. Arrange the 16 reserved pecan halves over the surface in a 4 × 4 pattern, centering one over each future bar, and press gently into the caramel. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt.
3. Leave the pan on the counter at room temperature for approximately 2 hours, or until the caramel has set. The bars do not need to be refrigerated or frozen to set.
4. Lift the bars out of the pan using the parchment overhang and transfer to a cutting board. Using a long, sharp knife, cut into 16 squares, slicing between the decorative pecans so each bar is topped with one, and wiping the knife clean between cuts. Serve at room temperature.