

Salted-Caramel Squares

Ingredients

Pastry Shell

- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 large egg white, beaten

Caramel

- 2 1/4 cups heavy cream
- 1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped
- 2 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 3/4 sticks unsalted butter
- 2 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
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Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Line a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on the short sides. In a large bowl, using a handheld mixer at low speed, cream the butter. Beat in the confectioners' sugar. Add the whole eggs and beat until incorporated, then beat in the flour and salt. Press the pastry into the prepared pan in an even layer, 1/4 inch thick. Freeze until firm, 10 minutes.
2. Line the pastry with parchment paper and fill with pie weights. Bake for 35 minutes, until just set. Carefully remove the pie weights and parchment. Brush the shell with the egg white and bake for 20 minutes longer, until golden and cooked through. Let cool.
3. In a saucepan, bring the cream, vanilla bean and seeds to a simmer. Cover; keep warm.
4. In a large, heavy saucepan, stir the sugar into 1/4 cup of water. Simmer over moderate heat, without stirring, until a deep amber caramel forms, 7 minutes.
5. Remove the caramel from the heat and carefully add the cream. When the bubbling subsides, stir in the butter. Insert a candy thermometer and cook over moderately high heat, stirring with a wooden spoon, until the caramel reaches 240°, 10 minutes. Discard the vanilla bean and stir in the salt. Pour the caramel over the shell. Refrigerate until firm, 4 hours or overnight; bring to room temperature. Remove the bar from the pan using the parchment overhang; cut into squares.

Chocolate-Peppermint Brownies

These rich peppermint brownies topped with crushed candy canes are from London's cult-favorite bakery Violet. If you can't find candy canes, use striped peppermint candies.

Ingredients

- 2 sticks unsalted butter, cut into small pieces, plus more for greasing
- 1 pound bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 teaspoons pure peppermint extract
- 4 large eggs
- 1 3/4 cups packed light brown sugar
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 4 candy canes, crushed (1/3 cup)

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Butter a 9-by-13-inch baking pan and line with parchment paper; allow 2 inches of overhang on the long sides.
2. In a heatproof bowl, combine two-thirds of the chopped chocolate with the 2 sticks of butter. Set the bowl over a pot of simmering water and stir until melted. Scrape the chocolate into another bowl and let cool slightly. Add the remaining chopped chocolate and the peppermint extract to the heatproof bowl and melt over the simmering water; remove from the heat and let cool slightly.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs with the brown sugar until combined. Whisk in the chocolate-butter mixture until glossy and thick. Sprinkle the flour and salt into the bowl and stir until just incorporated. Spread the brownie batter in the prepared baking pan. Dollop the peppermint chocolate onto the brownie batter and swirl in with a table knife.
4. Bake the brownies in the center of the oven for 15 minutes. Sprinkle the crushed candy canes on top and bake for 10 to 15 minutes longer, until the edges are set and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few moist crumbs. Let the brownies cool in the pan for at least 2 hours. Cut into squares and serve.

Chocolate-Raspberry Icebox Cake

This Chocolate-Raspberry Icebox Cake is creamy, it's dreamy, and it's so simple to make. Crushed cookies, fresh raspberries, and layers of tart raspberry sorbet and vanilla ice cream transform into a gorgeous marbled layer cake in about 15 minutes — no frosting required. The raspberries sink into the milky, sweet layers of ice cream, adding a tart flavor and pops of color to the cake, and crunchy chocolate cookie crumble layers are the perfect sweet and salty counterpoint, adding satisfying texture and a hint of bittersweet flavor. Finally, after a deep chill in the freezer, the cake is topped with whipped cream and more raspberries.

Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- 2 pints vanilla ice cream, softened
- 1 pint raspberry sorbet, softened
- 1 (9-ounce) package chocolate wafer cookies (such as Nabisco Famous Chocolate Wafers), crushed (about 2 1/2 cups)
- 2 cups fresh raspberries (about 9 ounces), plus more for garnish
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 tablespoons powdered sugar

Directions

1. Lightly coat a 9- x 5-inch loaf pan with cooking spray. Line with parchment paper, making sure all sides are fully covered and leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides.
2. Fold softened ice cream and sorbet together in a large bowl until sorbet is just streaked through ice cream but not quite swirled, 2 to 3 folds.
3. Sprinkle 1/2 cup crushed cookies into bottom of prepared loaf pan. Spread 1 1/2 cups ice cream mixture over crushed cookies. Scatter 1/2 cup fresh raspberries over top, gently pressing into ice cream mixture. Repeat layers 3 times, ending with remaining 1/2 cup crushed cookies.
4. Wrap loaf pan tightly with plastic wrap, and freeze until cake is firm, at least 4 hours or up to 24 hours.
5. Remove ice cream cake from freezer; unwrap and let stand at room temperature 5 minutes. Meanwhile, whisk together cream and powdered sugar in a medium bowl until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes.
6. Lift ice cream cake out of loaf pan using parchment paper overhang as handles, and invert onto a large plate or platter. Dollop whipped cream over top of cake. Garnish with additional fresh raspberries. Slice and serve.

Air Fryer Basque Cheesecake

Air fryers can be used to make everything from [crispy coconut shrimp](#) to [fudgy brownies](#); here, we're using one to whip up a quick version of a Basque cheesecake. Evenly browned with a creamy, silky, smooth center, this cheesecake boasts just the right amount of sweetness to contrast the bitter burnt top. Drizzling honey on top of the cake after baking adds an extra layer of warm sweetness, making this dessert feel that much more decadent.

Ingredients

- 1 pound cream cheese, at room temperature
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 3 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- Honey, for drizzling

Directions

1. Preheat a large (6-quart or larger) air fryer to 375°F, if preheating is suggested by manufacturer. Crumple a sheet (about 18 inches long) of parchment paper into a ball, then unroll; press sheet into a 6-inch springform pan or cake pan. Set aside.
2. While air fryer preheats, beat cream cheese, granulated sugar, and brown sugar with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on low speed until completely smooth and sugar has dissolved, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape down sides as needed. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating on low speed until just incorporated before adding next egg. Stop and scrape down sides and bottom of bowl. Add whipping cream, lemon juice, salt, and vanilla to cream cheese mixture; beat on low speed until just combined, about 15 seconds. Sprinkle flour over cream cheese mixture; beat on low speed until just combined, about 20 seconds.
3. Place a fine mesh strainer over a medium or large bowl or liquid measuring cup. Working in batches, if needed, pour cheese cream mixture through strainer, pressing and scraping bottom of strainer with a rubber spatula until most of the mixture has strained through (some thicker bits may remain). Discard solids. Pour strained mixture into prepared cake pan.
4. Remove basket from preheated air fryer; using tongs, if desired, carefully lower cheesecake in pan into basket (using 1 or 2 tongs helps to keep hands from getting close to hot basket). Return basket to air fryer; cook at 375°F for 28 minutes. Remove basket from air fryer, and check to see if cheesecake center is still jiggly or the edges around top of cake appear wet. If so, continue cooking at 375°F for 4 to 6 minutes. Cheesecake is done when the top is very dark brown, the entire cheesecake moves together when jiggled, and the top of the cake slides around only slightly.
5. Remove cheesecake in pan from air fryer basket; transfer to a wire rack, and let cool completely, about 1 hour. Transfer cheesecake in pan to refrigerator; chill completely, at least 4 hours or up to 12 hours. Loosen sides of springform pan, and slide cheesecake out from pan. Gently remove parchment paper from cake. Drizzle with honey, and serve. Cheesecake may be stored loosely covered or in an airtight container in refrigerator up to 3 days.

Almond Cake

This light, delicious gluten-free cake is gently scented with lemon zest. It's gluten-free, comes together in less than an hour, and has a lovely lemony flavor. Make this now, for afternoon snacking, dessert, or even brunch.

Ingredients

- 4 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons grated lemon zest
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 1 1/2 cup blanched almond flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup sliced blanched almonds
- Powdered sugar, for garnish

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Place a round of parchment paper on bottom of a 9-inch springform pan, and grease it and sides of pan with butter or cooking spray. Separate egg yolks and whites. Set whites aside and whisk yolks together with lemon zest and 1/4 cup of sugar.
2. Whisk together almond flour, baking powder and salt in a separate bowl. Add flour mixture to egg mixture and stir to combine thoroughly. (Mixture will be very thick).
3. In a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, beat egg whites on low speed, gradually increasing speed to medium. When whites begin to froth and increase in volume, slowly add the remaining 1/4 cup of sugar. Increase speed to medium-high and beat until soft peaks form, about 1 minute.
4. Stir a third of whipped egg whites into almond flour mixture until well combined. (You can be more aggressive when stirring in this initial addition of egg whites. Don't worry about deflating the whites, they are meant to lighten and loosen the almond flour mixture. Fold remaining whipped egg whites into almond flour mixture in 2 additions, ensuring egg whites are fully incorporated before adding the next batch. Pour batter into pan; spread into an even layer with a small offset spatula using as few strokes as possible. Sprinkle almonds on top and bake until lightly golden and top of cake springs back when touched, about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Run a knife around edges of cake and then release cake from springform pan, discarding parchment paper. Transfer cake to a serving plate. Sprinkle generously with powdered sugar and serve.