

Cook's Country

Nanaimo Bars

SERVES Makes 18 bars

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

These three-layer Canadian treats, with their coconutty cookie bases, custardy centers, and chocolate ganache tops, have a spectrum of sweet flavors and satisfying textures worthy of international recognition. For our version, we blitzed graham crackers and coconut in the food processor and bound them with melted chocolate and corn syrup to create a chewy yet sturdy base. The soft middle layer is traditionally made using custard powder, an ingredient common in Canadian kitchens. But we found a work-around for U.S. cooks: Nonfat dry milk powder contributed a sweet-salty flavor and gave the filling its signature soft yet set texture. A quick ganache of melted chocolate chips, butter, and corn syrup slathered over the chilled filling helped these Nanaimo bars shine.



INGREDIENTS

Crust

- ☐ ½ cup (3 ounces) bittersweet chocolate chips
- ☐ 6 whole graham crackers, broken into 1-inch pieces
- ☐ ⅔ cup (2 ounces) sweetened shredded coconut
- ☐ ½ cup pecans, toasted
- ☐ ¼ cup (¾ ounce) unsweetened cocoa powder

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

✿ For bars with tidy edges, be sure to wipe your knife clean with a dish towel after each cut. We developed this recipe with Ghirardelli 60% Premium Baking Chips.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 FOR THE CRUST: Make foil sling for 8-inch square baking pan by folding 2 long sheets of aluminum foil so each is 8 inches wide. Lay sheets of foil in pan perpendicular to each other, with extra foil hanging over edges of pan. Push foil into corners and up sides of pan, smoothing foil flush to pan. Spray foil with vegetable oil spray.

- ☐ 1/8 teaspoon table salt
- ☐ 1/3 cup light corn syrup

Filling

- ☐ 1 1/4 cups (5 ounces) confectioners' sugar
- ☐ 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- ☐ 1/4 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- ☐ 1/8 teaspoon table salt
- ☐ 1/4 cup heavy cream
- ☐ 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Topping

- ☐ 2/3 cup (4 ounces) bittersweet chocolate chips
- ☐ 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ☐ 1 tablespoons light corn syrup

2 Microwave chocolate chips in bowl at 50 percent power until melted, 1 to 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Process cracker pieces, coconut, pecans, cocoa, and salt in food processor until cracker pieces are finely ground, about 30 seconds. Add corn syrup and melted chocolate and pulse until combined, 8 to 10 pulses (mixture should hold together when pinched with your fingers). Transfer to prepared pan. Using bottom of greased measuring cup, press crumbs into bottom of pan. Refrigerate while making filling.

3 FOR THE FILLING: In clean, dry food processor, process sugar, butter, milk powder, and salt until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Add cream and vanilla and process until fully combined, about 15 seconds. Spread filling evenly over crust. Cover pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate until filling is set and firm, about 2 hours.

4 FOR THE TOPPING: Microwave chocolate chips, butter, and corn syrup in bowl at 50 percent power until chocolate chips and butter are melted and mixture is smooth, 1 to 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Using offset spatula, spread chocolate mixture evenly over set filling. Refrigerate until topping is set, about 30 minutes.

5 Using foil overhang, lift bars out of pan and transfer to cutting board; discard foil. Using chef's knife, trim outer 1/4 inch of square to make neat edges (wipe knife clean with dish towel after each cut). Cut square into thirds to create 3 rectangles. Cut each rectangle crosswise into 6 equal pieces. Let bars sit at room temperature for 20 minutes before serving. (Nanaimo bars can be refrigerated for up to 2 days.)

