

Millionaire's Shortbread

Source: Food52 2014

Ingredients

- 1½ c. flour
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- 5 tbsp sugar
- 1½ sticks unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1¼ c. sugar
- ¼ c. water
- 5 tbsps heavy cream
- 5 tbsps salted butter, cubed
- 1 tbsp creme fraiche
- ½ c. heavy cream
- 4 oz semisweet chocolate, chopped
- Maldon, grey or smoked sea salt

Method

Shortbread

1. Put a rack in the center of the oven and heat it to 350 degrees. Sift the flour and salt into a medium bowl and whisk in the sugar.
2. Cut the butter into chunks and add it to the flour, stirring with a fork to make a soft dough. (I also used my hands near the end) Gently pat the dough into a 9-inch square baking pan. Prick the dough all over with a fork and bake for 20 to 30 minutes, until it is golden and no longer looks at all wet. Set aside to cool while you make the caramel and chocolate topping.

Caramel (read notes)

1. Combine the sugar and water in a medium saucepan and set over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, swirling occasionally until the sugar has melted but without stirring. Simmer for about 10 minutes (more!) swirling the pot every once in a while, until the sugar turns a dark amber color. Do not let it get too dark, or it will taste burnt.
2. As soon as the sugar reaches the right color, remove it from the heat and carefully add the cream, whisking all the time (the mixture will bubble up as you do this, so use an oven mitt or a long-handled whisk). Whisk in the butter gradually and then the creme fraiche. Set aside to cool for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. When the caramel is cool enough to touch, pour it evenly over the shortbread, tipping the pan gently and tapping it on the counter to get rid of any bubbles. Put in the fridge to firm up a little.

Chocolate Topping

1. When the caramel has firmed up a bit, bring the cream to a boil in a small saucepan. Off the heat, immediately whisk in the chocolate until smooth and shiny. Let the mixture cool for

about 5 minutes and then pour over the caramel, again tilting the pan and tapping it against the counter to smooth it out. Let it sit at room temperature for about 15 minutes, until the chocolate starts to firm up a little.

2. To finish, sprinkle the top with salt and refrigerate until firm enough to cut into squares, at least 3 hours. Serve quickly, as the caramel will start to ooze quickly at room temperature.

Notes

Making caramel is a nightmare for me and I never succeed first time but it is worth trying again. One suggestion is to cover the pan until the sugar has completely dissolved so, because of the steam, no crystals form on the sides of the pan. Once crystals happen, doom. Never use a spoon, only swirl but try not to swirl liquid up on the sides of the pan. Once it starts to color, which seems to take a long time, it goes very quickly so be alert.

I used chocolate chips for the chocolate topping. The salt on the top is the greatest. Don't skip it! The recipe says to cut cookies into 16 pieces but I think it is too rich for that. I cut it into 25 and still thought it was more than enough. Always more fun to have two small pieces than one that is overwhelming.