

Salt and Serenity

Salted Caramel Buttercream

The buttercream recipe comes from www.bravetart.com and the caramel recipe is from Rose Levy Beranbaum's *"The Baking Bible."*

You will need a stand mixer and candy thermometer to prepare this recipe.

Buttercream:

5 large egg whites

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt

1 pound unsalted butter, cut into 2" chunks and softened at room temperature for 30 minutes

1 teaspoon vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste

1 recipe salted caramel (recipe below)

1. Combine the egg whites, sugar and salt together in the bowl of your stand mixer. Set the bowl over a pan of water and turn the heat on medium low. You don't need the water to even simmer, you just want it hot enough to steam, since steam is what actually heats the whites.
2. Whisk frequently to prevent an egg white omelet forming on the sides, but continual mixing isn't necessary. Aim to get the mixture to at least a 145°F for food safety reasons, but reaching 150°F would make for a nice margin of error. If your egg whites are at room temperature, this won't take very long, maybe just a few minutes. Whites straight from the fridge will take longer.
3. When the mixture is sufficiently hot, remove from the heat and use the whisk attachment to whip on medium high speed until the mixture has doubled in volume and turned snowy white. Continue whipping until the meringue is cool. Use your hands to feel the bowl itself, rather than simply testing the temperature of the meringue. You want it to feel perfectly cool to the touch with no trace of warmth. Note: if you are using a glass or ceramic bowl, even if the meringue has cooled, the bowl itself may still be quite warm and continue conducting heat into the buttercream over time. If you are using a glass or ceramic bowl, transfer the meringue to a new bowl before proceeding or continue mixing until the bowl itself is cool.
4. Replace whisk attachment with paddle attachment. Turn the mixer down

to medium-low and begin adding in the butter, one chunk at a time. If you didn't let your meringue cool enough, this is when you'll really regret it. By the time you've added all the butter, you may need to scrape down the bowl to fully incorporate any butter or meringue that's stuck at the sides. At one point it will look like the buttercream has curdled, but just keep beating and it will come together. Add vanilla extract or paste.

5. Beat in salted caramel until thoroughly incorporated. Buttercream will keep in fridge for a week and freezer for 6 months.

Salted Caramel:

1 cup sugar
1 Tablespoon corn syrup
¼ cup water
¼ cup plus 2 Tablespoons 35% cream, heated
2 Tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste
1 teaspoon Kosher salt

1. Spray a glass 2-cup measuring cup with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Clip candy thermometer to edge of a medium heavy nonstick saucepan, making sure bottom of thermometer does not touch pot bottom. Stir together sugar, corn syrup and water until all the sugar is moistened. Heat, stirring constantly, until the sugar dissolves and the syrup is bubbling. Stop stirring and let syrup boil undisturbed until it reaches 380°F on thermometer.
3. Remove from heat and immediately, slowly pour in hot cream. It will bubble furiously. Use a silicone spatula or wooden spoon to gently stir caramel, scraping the thicker stuff that may have settled to the bottom of the pot. Return pot to a very low heat and continue stirring for about 1 minute until caramel is fully dissolved and caramel mixture is uniformly coloured.
4. Remove from heat and stir in butter. Keep stirring until mixture is evenly coloured.
5. Pour into greased measuring cup and let cool for 3 minutes. Stir in vanilla and salt. Refrigerate for 45 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes, until cool to the touch (70°F). Caramel is now ready to be beaten into buttercream.

