

Salt and Serenity

Sweet and Salty Blondies

These are a triple layered treat. Sandwiched between a pretzel crust and a chewy Blondie layer, is a gooey salted caramel filling. You can bake these in a 9x9 inch or 10x10 inch square baking pan. If you use a 9 inch square pan, you will get 16 Blondies, if you use a 10 inch square pan, you will yield 25 Blondies.

Salted Caramel:

2 cups granulated sugar
2 Tablespoons light corn syrup
½ cup water
½ cup 35% cream, heated
½ cup unsalted butter, room temperature, cut into 8 pieces
1 teaspoon vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste
1 teaspoon Kosher salt

Pretzel Crust Layer:

3 heaping cups of small pretzel twists
¾ cup all-purpose flour
¾ cup packed light brown sugar
½ teaspoon baking soda
¾ cup (6 ounces) unsalted butter, melted

Blondie Layer:

6 ounces unsalted butter, melted
1½ cups light brown sugar, packed
2 large eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste
1½ cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon Kosher salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
4 ounces chopped Valhrona Dulcey blond chocolate or white chocolate
16-25 small pretzel twists (depending on pan size you use)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 9x9 inch or 10x10 inch baking pan with parchment paper. Watch this video to show you the best way to do this.
http://www.saltandserenity.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/lining-pan-4.m4v?_=1
2. Spray a glass 4 cup measuring cup with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
3. **Prepare salted caramel:** 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. If you notice the edges of the caramel getting darker than the center, swirl the pan gently to even out the caramel while it is cooking.
4. 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. Add butter, salt and vanilla. Stir well until caramel is uniform in colour and smooth.
 5. Pour caramel into greased measuring cup and place in fridge to cool it quickly.
 6. **Prepare pretzel layer:** Place pretzels into a zip-loc bag. Using your hands, or a rolling pin, crush pretzels quite finely. There can be a few big chunks of pretzels still in the mix.
 7. In a medium bowl, mix together crushed pretzels, flour, brown sugar, baking soda and melted butter. Pat the crushed pretzel mixture evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake in 350°F oven for 10 minutes. Set aside and allow to cool for about 15 minutes.
 8. **Make Blondie batter:** In a medium bowl, mix together melted butter and sugar until thoroughly combined. Whisk in eggs and vanilla extract. Sift in flour, salt and baking powder and mix until just combined. Fold in white or blonde chocolate pieces. Set batter aside.
 9. Spread cooled caramel sauce over pretzel layer. An offset spatula will make this a bit easier to do.
 10. Spoon Blondie mixture over caramel layer. Gently spread out Blondie batter into an even layer. Arrange 16 (or 25) small pretzel twists over raw Blondie batter. Bake until set, about 25-28 minutes.
 11. Let cool at room temperature for about 30 minutes. Run a thin knife around the 4 sides of the pan to unstick any hardened caramel. Chill Blondies in fridge for about 1 hour. Remove from pan. The easiest way to remove from pan is to turn pan upside down onto your cutting board. If it does not slide out right away, run a sharp small knife around perimeter of Blondies again to unstick caramel. Peel off parchment paper, flip Blondies right side up and cut into 16 (or 25) squares. If you want pristine clean and tidy squares, run a very sharp knife under hot water and dry knife. Repeat for each cut you make.

