

Pretzel Crusted Peanut Butter Bars

The chocolate topping on these bars looks like you spent hours piping a basket-weave pattern, but it's actually made with a plastic mold, meant for clay work. I bought mine online. Here is the link: <http://www.biggerceramicstore.com/plastic-texture-mats-13552.html> The mold will need to be trimmed to fit the size of baking pan you are using.

The peanut butter filling recipe is from Anna Olsen.

Makes 16 two-inch squares.

Pretzel Base:

2 heaping cups of small pretzel twists
½ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup packed light or dark brown sugar
¼ teaspoon baking soda
½ cup unsalted butter, melted

Peanut Butter Filling:

12 ounces white chocolate, chopped
4 ounces butterscotch chips
1 cup peanut butter
2 Tablespoons corn starch
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Chocolate Topping:

10 ounces bittersweet or semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
3 ounces milk chocolate, chopped

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8x8 inch square baking pan with parchment paper.
2. **Prepare pretzel layer:** Place pretzels into a zip-loc bag. Using your hands, crush pretzels quite finely. There can be a few big chunks of pretzels still in the mix. The back of a metal measuring cup works quite well to assist with the crushing. You will end up with about 1 cup of crushed pretzels.
3. In a medium bowl, mix together crushed pretzels, flour, brown sugar, baking soda and melted butter. Pat the mixture evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake in 350° oven for 10 minutes. Set aside and allow to cool.
4. **Prepare filling:** In a large bowl, set over a pot of simmering water, stir together white chocolate, butterscotch chips, peanut butter, corn starch, vanilla extract or paste and salt, until completely melted and smooth. Pour over cooled crust and chill in fridge for 2 hours, or in the freezer for 30 minutes if you just can't wait!
5. **Prepare topping:** Using sharp scissors, trim plastic basket weave mold to an 8x8 inch square. In a medium sized bowl, set over a pot of simmering water, melt chopped bittersweet chocolate until smooth. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set basket-weave mold on paper. Spread chocolate evenly over the mold. Chill in fridge until firm, about 30-40 minutes. Remove from fridge and let sit at room temperature for about 5 minutes before unmolding. If you try to unmold right away the chocolate will crack.

6. Turn mold over and peel off parchment paper. Then carefully and slowly peel off the plastic mat. Place chocolate layer back on baking sheet and refrigerate until ready to use.
7. **Assembly:** Use parchment paper to unmold crust and peanut butter filling from pan. Set aside. Melt milk chocolate in bowl over simmering heat. Spread milk chocolate over peanut butter layer. Place dark chocolate layer on top of melted chocolate and pat gently to adhere. Use a large serrated knife and cut into 16 two-inch squares.