

Salt and Serenity

Millionaire's Rice Krispie Bars

Imagine Rice Krispie Squares made with Mars Bars instead of marshmallows, as the “glue” to hold everything together. That becomes the base layer for these rich treats. That chewy bottom layer gets topped with a middle layer of creamy caramel. The whole thing gets topped with a firm layer of dark chocolate, a decorative drizzle of white chocolate and a sprinkle of flaky sea salt. A very rich and decadent treat.

I can't remember where I got the idea for using Mars Bars instead of marshmallows, but we have been making them that way for years in our house. A few weeks ago, I was craving them and wondered what would happen if I topped them with a layer of caramel and chocolate (recipe from Cook's Illustrated). As you can imagine, they are over the top delicious.

You will need an instant read thermometer for making the caramel layer.

Rice Krispie Base Layer:

362 grams Mars Bars* (you will need 7 52-gram bars), each cut into 6 pieces

113 grams (½ cup) unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch cubes

59 grams (3 Tablespoons) Golden Corn Syrup

170 grams (6 cups) Rice Krispies

Caramel Layer:

400 grams (1 ¼ cups) sweetened condensed milk

213 grams (1 cup packed) brown sugar

113 grams (½ cup) heavy cream

156 grams (½ cup) corn syrup

113 grams (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter

½ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt

Chocolate Layer:

226 grams bittersweet chocolate (170 grams chopped fine with sharp knife, 56 grams grated on box grater)

56 grams white chocolate, finely chopped with sharp knife

1 teaspoon flaky sea salt (I like Maldon)

1. **Make Mars Bar Rice Krispie base:** Place chopped Mars Bars, butter, and corn syrup in a large microwave safe bowl. Microwave on medium power for 2 minutes. Stir and microwave for 1 more minute on medium power.
2. While Mars Bar mixture is melting, line 9x13 inch pan with foil for easy removal. To make a foil sling, fold 2 long sheets of aluminum foil; first sheet should be 13 inches wide and second sheet should be 9 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.
3. Place Rice Krispies in a large mixing bowl. Set aside. Stir Mars Bar mixture until smooth. Pour melted mixture over the Rice Krispies and, with damp hands, mix well until all the Krispies are coated with the Mars Bar mixture. Pat mixture into prepared pan in an even layer. I find that the bottom of a ½ cup metal measuring cup is the perfect tool for getting an even layer. Set pan aside and make the caramel layer.

4. **Make caramel layer:** Stir all ingredients together in large, heavy-bottomed saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until mixture registers between 236°F and 239°F (temperature will fluctuate), 16 to 20 minutes. Pour over Rice Krispie layer and spread to even thickness (mixture will be very hot). Let cool completely, about 1½ hours.
5. **Make chocolate layer:** Once the caramel is firm, microwave chopped chocolate in bowl at 50 percent power, stirring every 15 seconds, until melted but not much warmer than body temperature (check by holding in palm of your hand), 1 to 2 minutes. Add grated chocolate and stir until smooth, returning to microwave for no more than 5 seconds at a time to finish melting if necessary. Spread chocolate evenly over surface of filling.
6. Melt white chocolate at 50% power for 1 minute, Stir well. Transfer melted white chocolate to disposable piping bag. Working quickly, before the dark chocolate sets, pipe the white chocolate over the dark in evenly spaced parallel lines.
7. Drag the tip of a thin, sharp knife through the lines of chocolate, spacing them evenly from one side of the pastry to the other; go first in one direction and then in the opposite direction to make a chevron pattern.
8. Refrigerate until chocolate is just set, about 10 minutes.
9. Using foil overhang, lift shortbread out of pan and transfer to cutting board. Discard foil. Using serrated knife and gentle sawing motion, cut shortbread in half crosswise to create two 6½ x 9-inch rectangles. Cut each rectangle in half to make four 3¼ x 9-inch strips. Cut each strip crosswise into 10 equal pieces. (Shortbread can be stored at room temperature, between layers of parchment, for up to 1 week.)

*Mars Bars are called Milky Way Bars in the USA