

Brown Butter Carmelita Bars

Poetry & Pies

prep time: 30-35 minutes (includes making homemade caramel)

bake time: 25-30 minutes

total time: 1 hour, 5 minutes

servings: 12-16



Ingredients

- ¾ cup (170g) salted butter*
- 1 cup (136g) all purpose flour
- 1 cup (80g) old-fashioned rolled oats
- ½ teaspoon (2g) baking powder
- ¾ cup (150g) packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon (13g) pure vanilla extract
- about ⅔ to ¾ batch of [vanilla salted caramel sauce](#)**
- 1 ½ cups (255g) semisweet chocolate chips (or chopped baking chocolate)

Instructions

1. If using homemade caramel sauce, be sure to make it ahead of time or at least before starting on the rest of the bars. If making it the same day, just let it cool to where it's still pourable but not too hot.
2. Preheat the oven to 350F/175C and line an [8x8 square pan](#) with [parchment paper](#) by cutting or folding a strip to be the exact width of the pan and hang over two sides. You can also use foil, but parchment is great for absorbing any excess grease.
3. Brown the butter. In a medium saucepan (deeper than you think you need), heat the butter over medium heat, stirring constantly, until it bubbles then foams and begins to brown. This will take about 8-10 minutes. Watch carefully—it's typically done while it's foamy and you can't actually see the bottom, so watch for streaks of golden butter coming up from the bottom and

being stirred into the foam. It will also have a nutty aroma when it's browned. Remove from heat and set aside.

4. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk the flour, oats, baking powder, and brown sugar. Be sure to mix until no sugar lumps remain, as those can melt then burn during baking.
5. Stir in browned butter and vanilla until fully combined. It will be crumbly.
1. Sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the dough evenly into the prepared pan. (I used $\frac{2}{3}$ and found it to be perfect, because I wanted a fairly full top crust with some bits of filling bubbling through. As long as you have at least half the dough on the bottom crust, the exact ratio is up to your preference.) Press gently to seal edges and ensure no cracks on the bottom that caramel could seep through. Don't press too hard or it will be tough after baking.
2. Bake the bottom layer for just 10 minutes.
3. While the bottom layer bakes, heat up your caramel sauce until a pourable consistency. You can do this in the microwave at half power in 15 second increments, in a double boiler, or in a cup or pan of very warm water (not fully submerged—you don't want water getting into the jar). Don't heat it so hot that you can't touch it—just get it to where you can easily pour it over the bars.
4. Once the bottom dough has baked for 10 minutes, remove from oven and immediately sprinkle the chocolate evenly over the crust.
5. Carefully pour the caramel sauce over the chocolate. The recipe makes about 2 cups, but that's about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or so more than you probably need, so don't use all of it. The chocolate should ideally be covered in caramel but not drowning. Do not stir or spread the caramel—try to pour as evenly and slowly as you can.
6. Sprinkle remaining oatmeal dough evenly over the caramel sauce.
7. Return the pan to the oven and bake 15-20 minutes more, until the edges begin to brown (you might also see some caramel bubbling along the sides, but the dough may be covering this lovely action).

- Cool in the pan at least 1 hour, so the bars are set and the caramel is not scalding. Remove by pulling up the edges of the parchment and cut into desired number of bars.

Enjoy!

Store leftovers in an airtight container on the counter 3-4 days or the fridge up to 1 week.

**European butter is ideal, as it is creamier and will brown better. If using unsalted butter, add $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon sea salt or $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon table salt to the flour mixture.*

***You can sub [this quicker caramel sauce](#) that doesn't require a candy thermometer but does require a watchful eye. It makes a little less, so you'd use most if not all of the recipe. Or, you can sub your favorite recipe, a thicker store bought sauce that is solid at room temperature, or one bag of soft Kraft caramels or bits melted with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup heavy cream.*