

## Pecan Bars

This recipe is from the book "Afternoon Delights" by James McNair and Andrew Moore. The cookbook is a collection of "coffeehouse favorites: cookies & coffee cake, brownies & bars, scones & more."

### INGREDIENTS:

Crust:

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
1/4 tsp. salt  
2 cups bleached all-purpose flour

Topping:

1 1/2 cups firmly packed light brown sugar  
1/2 cup light corn syrup  
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter  
1/4 cup heavy (whipping) cream  
2 tps. pure vanilla extract  
4 cups pecans, lightly toasted, and coarsely chopped

### METHOD:

To toast the pecans spread them in a single layer in a baking pan. Transfer the pan to an oven that has been preheated to 350 degrees and toast the nuts, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned and fragrant, about 10 minutes. Let cool completely before using in recipes.

Position an oven rack so that the bars will bake in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease the bottom and sides of a 13 x 9 inch pan with shortening. Set aside.

To make the crust, in a bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer at medium speed until soft and creamy, about 45 seconds. Add the sugar and salt and mix until well blended. Add the flour, about 1 cup at a time, and mix until the dough is smooth, about 2 minutes.

Scrape the dough into the prepared pan and spread evenly. Place a piece of plastic wrap over the dough and press on the dough through the plastic wrap with your fingertips to form a smooth, even layer on the bottom of the pan. Remove the plastic wrap.

Transfer the pan to the oven and bake until the crust is golden brown, about 20 minutes.

To make the topping, in a saucepan, combine the brown sugar, corn syrup, and butter. Place over medium heat and bring the mixture to a full boil, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat, add the cream and vanilla, and mix until well blended. Add the toasted pecans and mix well.

Pour the topping mixture onto the crust and spread evenly. Return the pan to the oven and bake until the topping is bubbling all over, about 25 minutes. Remove the pan to a wire rack to cool completely.

Cut into 12 equal bars. Trim off the hard outer edges, if desired. The bars may be covered tightly and stored at room temperature for up to 2 days.