

GUASTELLO'S VILLAGE MARKET

Crunchy Peanut Bars

Ingredients:

Brown Sugar Crust:

1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour

½ tsp. salt

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened

½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar

Peanut Topping:

4 tbl. (1/2 stick) unsalted butter

2/3 cup light corn syrup

1 2/3 cup (10 oz.) peanut butter chips

2 tsp. vanilla extract

2 ¼ cups (12 oz.) salted peanuts

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350°. Grease the bottom and sides of a 9 x 13-inch baking pan.

In a medium bowl, stir together the flour and salt; set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, using the paddle attachment or beaters, beat the butter with the brown sugar at medium speed until combined, about 1 minute. At low speed, add the flour mixture and mix just until crumbly, 10 to 15 seconds.

Pat the dough into the bottom of the prepared pan. Prick the dough well with a fork. Bake the crust for 15 to 18 minutes, until golden brown around the edges. Transfer the pan to a wire rack to cool while you prepare the topping. Leave the oven on.

Make the topping:

In a large saucepan, combine the butter, corn syrup, and peanut butter chips and heat over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the chips are melted and the mixture is smooth, about 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract.

Pour the topping over the crust, using a spatula to spread it to the edges of the pan. Sprinkle the peanuts evenly over the topping, and press them lightly into the topping. Bake the bars for 12 to 15 minutes, until the topping is bubbly. Cool the bars completely in the pan on a wire rack.

Run a small knife around the edges of the pan to release the bars. Carefully invert the bars onto a baking sheet then reinvert it onto a cutting board. Using a sharp knife, cut into 36 bars.

Credit: The Good Cookie