



Christina's Brownie Shortbread Bars

Christina Marbury

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During one of the few snowy stretches this year, my family and I arrived at the VASA trail for a ski to discover a tent of folks from TART Trails serving up hot chocolate and homemade baked goods for the skiers. Happening upon things like this is one of the joys of living in this area. I enjoyed a delightful bar with a cookie base and nut-filled brownie top and knew I needed to recreate them at home.

These bars offer the joys of two of my favorite simple things to bake – shortbread and brownies! The shortbread cuts the sweetness of a full brownie and adds a pleasant crisp texture to the bottom of the bars.

INGREDIENTS

Shortbread Layer

8oz unsalted butter, softened

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup powdered sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

2 cups all purpose flour

Brownie Layer

2oz butter

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup 81% GDC Calceta chocolate discs

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup all purpose flour

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp GDC natural cocoa powder

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp baking powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

2 eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup pecans, or other nuts

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PREPARATION

Prepare an 8in x 8in pan by greasing it, then laying a strip of parchment paper across it so it covers the bottom and two of the sides, creating a sling. Grease the parchment paper.

Make shortbread dough

In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle, using a hand mixer, or with a strong arm, cream the butter, powdered sugar, and salt. This will take 3-4 minutes with a stand mixer.

Add flour in two additions, mixing on low after each one. Mix until the dough just comes together.

Press shortbread dough into an even layer in the prepared pan. Prick with a fork.

Bake at 350° for 18-20min, until the edges are faintly golden.

Toast pecans in the same oven for 7-10 minutes, until fragrant. Roughly chop toasted pecans.

Make brownie batter while the shortbread bakes.

Melt butter and chocolate in a double boiler. (Place a glass or metal bowl over a pan with an inch or two of water in the bottom. The bowl shouldn't touch the water.) Let cool for 5 minutes.

In a small bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt.

Add eggs and sugar to the melted chocolate mixture and whisk to combine.

Gently whisk in dry ingredients.

Stir in pecans.

Pour brownie batter over shortbread base and return to oven for about 20 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean.

Let cool completely before cutting.

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