

Pecan Pie Bars



Ingredients:

For the crust:

4 sticks of reduced-fat, unsalted butter, room temperature
3/4 cup granulated sugar
3 extra-large eggs
3/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
4 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt

For the topping:

4 sticks of reduced-fat, unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup honey
3 cups dark brown sugar
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
1/4 cup half and half
1 – 16-ounce bag of chopped pecans

Directions:

1) Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.

For the crust:

2) Place the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl, and beat on medium speed until blended. Add the eggs and the vanilla and mix until thoroughly combined.

3) Combine the flour, baking powder, and salt in another bowl.

4) Mix the dry ingredients into the crust batter until combined.

5) Press the dough evenly into a lightly greased 9 x 12-inch pan and place the pan in the oven. Bake for 15 minutes until crust is set but not browned. Remove the pan from the oven and let the crust cool.

For the topping:

6) Combine the butter, brown sugar, honey, and lemon zest in a large saucepan, and cook over medium heat until the butter is melted.

7) Raise the heat to medium-high and cook for about 5 minutes until you see the sugars start to form a deep, rich caramel color. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the half and half and the pecans.

8) Pour the caramel over the crust and return the pan to the oven. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes until the caramel is thick and bubbly. Remove the pan from the oven and allow the bars to cool.

9) Cover the pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate the bars until cold, about 30 – 45 minutes. Cut into bars and serve.