

SANDY TURTLES

Kristin Holt

"A 3-layer bar cookie: sandy brown-sugar shortbread, pecan caramel, and milk chocolate. I claim these as my own creation as they're a result of combining different recipes to suit my own taste-preferences." Tip: allow bars 8 hours (or overnight) to cool.

CRUST:

<u>9x13-inch pan (~48 squares)</u>	<u>Jelly-roll pan (~96 squares)</u>
2 cups all-purpose white flour	4 cups all-purpose white flour
1 cup brown sugar, packed	2 cups brown sugar, packed
½ cup soft real dairy butter (no substitutions)	1 cup soft real dairy butter (no substitutions)

1. Spray selected size baking pan: lightly on bottom and more heavily on sides (so caramel doesn't stick).
2. Combine flour and brown sugar in KitchenAid mixer bowl with whisk attachment. Once well combined, add soft butter. Stir 2 to 3 minutes or until mixture resembles fine crumbs and is fully homogenized. Pat mixture into prepared pan, raising edges of crust just a little on sides (no need to make a big ridge as with lemon bars). Press down so crust is moderately packed.

CARAMEL-NUT LAYER:

<u>9x13-inch pan (~48 squares)</u>	<u>Jelly-roll pan (~96 squares)</u>
2 cups pecan halves	4 cups pecan halves
1 ¼ cup real dairy butter (no substitutions)	2 ½ cups real dairy butter (no substitutions)
1 Tbsp light Karo syrup	2 Tbsp light Karo syrup
1 cup brown sugar, packed	2 cups brown sugar, packed
1 tsp. real vanilla extract	2 tsp. real vanilla extract

1. Sprinkle pecans over *unbaked* crust in single layer.
2. PREHEAT OVEN TO 345°. Set oven rack to middle.
3. Prepare caramel: Melt butter, Karo, and brown sugar in heavy saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly with flat-edge spoon so candy doesn't scorch. Cook until entire surface is bubbly, and continue for 90 seconds more.
4. Remove caramel from heat and add vanilla. Stir thoroughly. Pour hot caramel over pecans and crust, spreading it out evenly. It's OK if the caramel reaches the sides of the pan.
5. If using a jelly-roll pan, prepare sheets of foil to rest immediately under pan in oven, cupping up edges of foil to catch drips. (This step is unnecessary if using a 9x13-inch pan and smaller recipe quantities.)
6. BAKE bars in preheated oven for roughly 34 minutes (my oven's timing at this heat, with my type of jelly-roll pan) OR *until entire surface is bubbly—to ensure the shortbread crust is fully baked and caramel reaches a high enough temperature to set.*
7. Carefully remove pan from oven when done. Set to cool on wire rack. (I use the "rack"/stovetop cooking surface on my gas range.)

CHOCOLATE LAYER:

<u>9x13-inch pan (~48 squares)</u>	<u>Jelly-roll pan (~96 squares)</u>
2 cups (~11.5 oz) milk chocolate chips	4 cups (~23 oz) milk chocolate chips

1. Allow bars to cool for about 4 or 5 minutes so the surface solidifies a bit.
2. Sprinkle milk chocolate chips over caramel-nut layer relatively evenly. Let rest about 2 to 3 minutes, allowing the chocolate to melt. Use knife or frosting spatula to smooth melted chocolate over bars.
3. ****Cool *completely* in pan on wire rack.** It may be necessary to put fully cooled bars (after 8+ hours cooling time) in fridge to set up chocolate beyond the too-sticky stage.
4. Use a sharp, short-bladed knife (such as a paring knife) to cut into 48 (or 96 bars).
5. Store loosely covered and refrigerate until serving.