PayDay

Make-ahead

Ken's note: TBD

A chewy, pale peanut caramel center packed in salted peanuts. No chocolate needed.

Ingredients

Peanut Caramel Center

- 1 can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/3 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Peanut Coating

- 3 cups salted roasted peanuts
- 1–2 tsp heavy cream, if needed to thin

Method

1. Lightly spray 16 cavities across the two molds.
2. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the condensed milk, sugar, corn syrup, butter, and salt. Stir over medium heat until the sugar dissolves.
3. Clip on the thermometer and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly and scraping the bottom (condensed milk scorches easily), to 242°F. It should stay light tan.
4. Off the heat, stir in the peanut butter and vanilla until smooth.
5. Pour about 1/3 cup into a small heatproof cup and set it aside; this will glue on the peanuts. Pour the rest into the 16 cavities, about two-thirds full.
6. Freeze 1 hour, then unmold and let the centers come to fridge temperature, about 20 minutes.
7. Pulse the peanuts 3–4 times in a food processor so most of them split into halves, and spread them on a sheet pan.
8. Rewarm the reserved caramel in 10-second microwave bursts until brushable, thinning it with cream if needed. Brush a thin coat over each center, then roll it in the peanuts, pressing hard to pack them on.
9. Let the bars set at room temperature 30 minutes. Wrap them individually or layer them between parchment.

Notes

Note. If the peanuts won't stick, rewarm the reserved caramel until fluid but not hot.