



Almond Joy Cookie Bars

Preheat oven to 375°F
Prep time 20 minutes. Cook time 40 minutes.



For the dough:

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups whole raw almonds, toasted (see directions below)
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter at room temperature
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt

For the filling:

1 can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk
1 14 oz. bag of shredded coconut (I buy extra for sprinkling on top to decorate)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the topping:

2 cups of dark chocolate chips or milk chocolate, whichever you prefer
2 tbs unsalted butter

Directions:

Spread raw whole almonds on a baking sheet and place in a 375°F oven for 12 minutes or until slightly browned. Cool. Reduce oven heat to 350°F.

While almonds are cooling, line a 9 x 13 baking sheet with parchment paper (aluminum foil will work too) that overhangs sides for easy removal from pan.

Once almonds are cooled, measure out 1 cup and place in food processor. Give almonds a good chop, reducing them to the size of small peas.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat butter and brown sugar until creamy. Add flour and salt. Stir in the chopped almonds (1 cup) until combined. Press mixture into the bottom of the prepared 9 x 13 pan and bake in preheated oven 5 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, combine the coconut, sweetened condensed milk, and vanilla extract. Mix until blended. Gently spread the coconut mixture over the crust and bake for an additional 20-25 minutes, until the coconut is a nice golden brown. Cool.

Using the parchment overhang, gently remove the entire pan of cookies and place on a cutting board. Using a long knife, gently score the cookies (do not cut through yet), making 36 cookies. Place a whole almond on each cookie then place cookies in the refrigerator to cool completely.

Using a double boiler or microwave, melt the chocolate chips with the butter, stirring often until the chocolate is just melted. Remove from heat and stir until smooth.

Remove cookie bars from the fridge and cut completely. Set the cookies on a cooling rack. Using a spoon and a knife for spreading, coat each cookie with the melted chocolate. Sprinkle some extra coconut on top if you'd like and let cool completely. Enjoy!