

Ultimate Turtle Brownies

SERVES MAKES 25 BROWNIES

TIME 1¾ HOURS, PLUS 1½ HOURS COOLING AND 2 HOURS CHILLING

Why This Works: For our ultimate turtle brownie recipe, we wanted something reminiscent of a candy turtle: rich, chewy, and chocolaty, with a bittersweet, tooth-sinking caramel and an abundance of pecans. The real challenge was deciding on the right texture for the caramel sauce in our ultimate turtle brownie recipe. A mere 6 tablespoons of cream produced a caramel that was pleasantly chewy and gooey; 2 tablespoons of corn syrup kept the caramel from crystallizing or turning gritty; and 2 tablespoons of butter made it smooth and silky.

CARAMEL

- 6** tablespoons heavy cream
- ¼** teaspoon table salt
- ¼** cup water
- 2** tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1¼** cups (8¾ ounces) sugar
- 2** tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1** teaspoon vanilla extract

BROWNIES

- 8** tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces
- 4** ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 2** ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- ¾** cup (3¾ ounces) all-purpose flour
- ½** teaspoon baking powder
- 2** large eggs, room temperature
- 1** cup (7 ounces) sugar
- 2** teaspoons vanilla extract
- ¼** teaspoon table salt
- ⅔** cup chopped pecans, plus 25 toasted pecan halves, divided
- ⅓** cup (2 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips (optional)

Before You Begin: To drizzle the caramel in step 4, use a ¼-cup dry measuring cup that has been sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. If the caramel is too cool to be fluid, reheat it in the microwave.

1. FOR THE CARAMEL: Combine cream and salt in small bowl; stir well to dissolve salt. Combine water and corn syrup in medium saucepan; pour sugar into center of saucepan, taking care not to let sugar granules touch sides of saucepan. Gently stir with spatula to moisten sugar thoroughly. Cover and bring to boil over medium-high heat and cook, covered and without stirring, until sugar is completely dissolved and liquid is clear, 3 to 5 minutes. Uncover and continue to cook, without stirring, until bubbles show faint golden color, 3 to 5 minutes longer. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue to cook (swirling saucepan occasionally) until caramel is light amber and registers about 360 degrees, 1 to 3 minutes longer. Off heat, carefully add cream mixture to center of saucepan; stir (mixture will bubble and steam vigorously) until cream is fully incorporated and bubbling subsides. Stir in butter and vanilla until combined. Transfer caramel to liquid measuring cup or bowl; set aside.

2. FOR THE BROWNIES: Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and



heat oven to 325 degrees. Make foil sling for 9-inch square baking pan by folding 2 long sheets of aluminum foil so each is 9 inches wide. Lay sheets of foil in pan perpendicular to each other, with extra foil hanging over edges of pan. Push foil into corners and up sides of pan, smoothing foil flush to pan. Grease foil.

3. Microwave butter, bittersweet chocolate, and unsweetened chocolate in bowl at 50 percent power, stirring occasionally, until melted and smooth, 2 to 4 minutes; set aside and let cool slightly. Meanwhile, whisk flour and baking powder together in second bowl; set aside. Whisk eggs in large bowl to combine; add sugar, vanilla, and salt and whisk until incorporated. Add cooled chocolate mixture to egg mixture and whisk until combined. Using rubber spatula, stir in flour mixture until almost combined. Stir in chopped pecans and chocolate chips, if using, until incorporated and no flour streaks remain.

4. Spread half of brownie batter in even layer in prepared pan. Using greased ¼-cup dry measuring cup, drizzle ¼ cup caramel over batter. Using spoon, dollop remaining batter in large mounds over caramel layer and spread into even layer. Drizzle another ¼ cup Caramel over top. Using butter knife, swirl brownie batter through caramel. Bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out with few moist crumbs attached, 35 to 40 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking. Let brownies cool completely in pan on wire rack, about 1½ hours.

5. Heat remaining caramel (you should have about ¾ cup) in microwave until warm and pourable but still thick (do not boil), 45 to 60 seconds, stirring once or twice; pour caramel over brownies. Spread caramel to cover surface. Refrigerate brownies, uncovered, for 2 hours.

6. Using foil overhang, remove brownies from pan, loosening sides with paring knife if needed. Using chef's knife, cut brownies into 25 pieces. Press pecan half onto surface of each brownie. Serve chilled or at room temperature. (Brownies can be refrigerated for up to 3 days.)