

No-Fail Homemade Cherry Mash Bars Everyone Will Ask For

Homemade Cherry Mash Bars Recipe: Sweet, Salty, and Perfect for the Holidays



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5 min

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INGREDIENTS

For the Cherry Layer:

2 cups granulated sugar

2/3 cup evaporated milk

... teaspoon salt

12 large marshmallows

1/2 cup unsalted butter

6 ounces cherry chips or substitute with 6 ounces white almond bark, 1 teaspoon cherry extract, and red food coloring

1 teaspoon vanilla extract omit if using cherry extract

For the Chocolate-Peanut Layer:

12 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips

1/2 cup creamy peanut butter

1 cup salted peanuts, crushed

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the pan: Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish with butter or non-stick spray. Set it aside so it is ready once the cherry layer is finished.
2. Cook the cherry mixture: In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the granulated sugar, evaporated milk, salt, marshmallows, and butter. Stir continuously as everything melts together and the mixture comes to a gentle boil.
3. Once it begins to boil, cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently so nothing scorches on the bottom of the pan.
4. Add the cherry flavor: Remove the saucepan from the heat. Stir in the cherry chips and vanilla extract until the mixture is smooth and fully melted. If you are using the substitute, stir in the melted almond bark, cherry extract, and enough red food coloring to achieve the color you want.
5. Spread and cool: Pour the cherry mixture into the prepared baking dish and spread it into an even layer. Let it cool until set.
6. Make the chocolate-peanut topping: In a double boiler, or in a heatproof bowl over simmering water, melt the semi-sweet chocolate chips until smooth. Stir in the peanut butter until fully combined, then fold in the crushed salted peanuts.
7. Assemble the bars: Pour the chocolate-peanut mixture over the cooled cherry layer. Spread evenly so the top is fully covered.
8. Chill: Refrigerate the bars for at least 2 hours, or until fully set.
9. Slice and serve: Cut into squares and serve chilled.

These bars are rich, so smaller squares are often perfect.

SWAPS & NOTES

Cherry chips can be tricky to find, so the substitute option is a great backup.

Melted white almond bark mixed with cherry extract and a little red food coloring gives you a very similar flavor and look.

You can also swap the semi-sweet chocolate chips for milk chocolate if you want a sweeter top layer, but I like semi-sweet here because it balances the sugary cherry base.

For texture, salted peanuts are my favorite because they add crunch and cut through the sweetness, but lightly salted roasted peanuts work nicely too.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

The biggest key to success is not rushing the cherry layer.

Let it boil for the full 5 minutes so it sets properly.

Stir often during cooking, because sugar mixtures can burn fast.

For the cleanest slices, warm a sharp knife under hot water, wipe it dry, and cut the bars while they are well chilled.

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