

Old-Fashioned Caramel Frosting Like Grandma Used to Make (But Easier!)

Why This Caramel Frosting Works



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15 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 5 tablespoons evaporated milk
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 2/3 cups powdered sugar (confectioners' sugar)

DIRECTIONS

1. Start with the Caramel Base: I grab a medium saucepan and combine the brown sugar, evaporated milk, butter, and salt. Set it over medium heat and stir constantly. It doesn't take long-once it comes to a boil, I immediately pull it off the heat.
2. Pro tip: Stir continuously while it heats to keep the sugar from burning or sticking to the bottom. You want a smooth mixture, not gritty caramel bits.
3. Cool It Down (Just a Little): After removing it from the stove, I let it sit for a few minutes-just enough so it's not scorching hot. This gives the flavors a chance to meld and ensures the powdered sugar blends in smoothly later on.
4. Stir in the Vanilla: Once it's cooled slightly, I add in the vanilla extract. It gives the frosting that warm, almost toasty finish that complements the brown sugar beautifully.
5. Beat in the Powdered Sugar: This is the only part where you need a little patience. I start adding the powdered sugar about 2 to 3 tablespoons at a time, stirring or beating well after each addition. I usually use a hand mixer, but a sturdy whisk works if you don't mind a little arm workout.
6. It thickens fast, so if it gets too stiff, I add a splash of evaporated milk-just a teaspoon at a time-until I reach my desired consistency: spreadable, glossy, and smooth.

SWAPS & NOTES

Banana or spice loaf : A warm, spiced quick bread topped with this frosting is the ultimate cozy dessert.

Apple cupcakes : The combo of apple and caramel is basically fall in cupcake form.

Sandwich cookies : Yep-spread a little between two soft sugar cookies and suddenly you've got a bakery-style treat.

Tips for the Best Results Every Time Don't skip the cooling step : If you add powdered sugar while the caramel is still piping hot, it can become lumpy or seize up.

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