

# “Billionaire” Chocolate Praline Shortbread



*My grandmother made incredible shortbread cookies, but just as I do with every treat I dream up, I added chocolate. And caramel. And praline nuts. This take on millionaire's shortbread is so good that I think it's worth even more than a cool million. (Note: This caramel uses the "dry" method and might take you a try or two before you perfect it. For tips on preparation, see Perfect Caramel Sauce, page 224.)*

## PREPARE THE SHORTBREAD

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease a 9 x 12-inch baking dish and line with parchment paper.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, mix the butter and sugar on medium until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low and add the flour and salt. Mix for 1 minute until the mixture is loosely combined.
3. Press the dough into the pan and bake until lightly golden, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool while you prepare the rest of the components.

## PREPARE THE PRALINE CARAMEL

1. In a heavy-bottomed pot, heat the sugar over high heat. Once it has begun melting, gently move the sugar around to prevent scorching. Do this as little as possible; do not fully stir it.
2. When the sugar has the consistency of wet sand, reduce heat to medium. Continue to move sugar around a bit, breaking up any clumps. Once the sugar is about 90 percent melted, turn off the heat and allow the residual heat to finish, about 2 to 3 minutes.
3. While the sugar is cooking, in a small saucepan over medium heat combine the cream, vanilla bean paste, salt, and corn syrup. Warm the mixture until just before boiling and stir well.
4. Slowly pour the cream mixture into the hot caramel. Only give the sugar about 2 to 3 minutes off the heat before doing this, or it will burn. Let the bubbles settle, then stir with a whisk until well combined. Pour through a strainer to remove any remaining sugar clumps, then stir in the praline nuts.

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**PREP TIME:** 15 minutes,  
plus chilling time  
**COOK TIME:** 45 minutes  
**YIELDS:** 24 bars

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## FOR THE SHORTBREAD

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted  
butter, room temperature,  
plus more for greasing  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup granulated sugar  
 $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon salt

## FOR THE PRALINE CARAMEL

2 cups granulated sugar  
1 cup heavy cream  
1 tablespoon vanilla  
bean paste  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup light corn syrup  
1 cup praline nuts  
(see page 228)



Photo Courtesy Philip Ashley Chocolatiers & Larry McGuirk/iStock

5. Pour the mixture over the prepared shortbread and smooth the top with a rubber spatula. Chill in the refrigerator for 15 to 20 minutes until set.

#### **PREPARE THE CHOCOLATE GANACHE**

1. In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, combine the chocolate chips and cream. Heat slowly, stirring often, until the chocolate is completely melted and the mixture is smooth and glossy, 3 to 4 minutes.
2. Pour the ganache over the caramel and smooth with a rubber spatula for even coverage. Sprinkle with salt to finish and refrigerate for 15 to 20 minutes to allow the chocolate to set. Serve and store at room temperature.

#### **FOR THE CHOCOLATE GANACHE**

1½ cups dark chocolate chips

⅓ cup heavy cream

½ teaspoon flaked sea salt (I like Maldon)

