

2026 CARCOAR SHOW FEATURE RECIPE SECTION IS SALTED CARAMEL LAYER CAKE

Entrants - please use the recipes below

There's a lot going on in this cake – layers of brown sugar cake, salted caramel, cream cheese frosting and brown sugar crumb for texture. It all adds up to salty-sweet deliciousness, which is well worth every step. To make things easier, the caramel, crumb and frosting can all be made several days ahead.

INGREDIENTS

Cake

140 grams brown sugar
140 grams caster sugar
120 grams softened butter
3 eggs
300 grams (2 cups) plain flour
80 ml (1/3 cup) buttermilk
Seeds of 1 vanilla bean (1 tsp vanilla bean paste)
3 tsp white vinegar
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

Salted caramel

400 grams caster sugar
250 ml (1 cup) pouring cream
120 grams butter, diced

Brown sugar crumb

75 grams butter, diced
150 grams (1 cup) plain flour
80 grams brown sugar
40 grams caster sugar

Cream cheese frosting

150 grams softened butter
110 grams brown sugar
750 grams softened cream cheese

METHOD

1. For salted caramel, stir sugar and 100ml water in a saucepan over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves, then brush down sides of pan with a wet pastry brush to remove sugar crystals and boil until dark caramel (7-8 minutes). Remove from heat, carefully add cream (hot caramel will spit), then add butter and 2 tsp sea salt flakes and swirl to combine. Cool, then refrigerate in an airtight container until required. Caramel will keep for up to 5 days.
2. For brown sugar crumb, preheat oven to 170C and line an oven tray with baking paper. In a bowl, rub butter into dry ingredients and ½ tsp sea salt with your fingertips to form coarse crumbs, spread on prepared tray and bake until golden brown (6-8 minutes). Cool completely, then store in an airtight container until required. Brown sugar crumb will keep for up to 5 days.



3. Keep oven at 170C and butter and line three 18cm-diameter cake tins with baking paper (see note). Beat sugars and butter in an electric mixer until pale and fluffy (6-7 minutes), scrape down sides of bowl, then beat in eggs one at a time, beating well and scraping down sides of bowl between additions. Add flour and buttermilk alternately in 2 or 3 batches, beating to just combine, then mix in vanilla. Combine vinegar and bicarbonate of soda in a bowl, stir into batter, then divide among cake tins and bake, swapping and turning tins partway through cooking, until golden brown and a skewer inserted withdraws clean (25-30 minutes). Cool in tins for 10 minutes, then turn out onto wire racks to cool completely. Trim tops flush with a serrated knife.
4. For cream cheese frosting, beat butter and sugar in an electric mixer until pale (4-5 minutes), scrape down sides of bowl, then add cream cheese and beat until fluffy (6-8 minutes).
5. To assemble, place a cake on a tray, spread with cream cheese frosting to 5mm thick, drizzle with a little salted caramel and scatter with a layer of brown sugar crumb. Repeat layering, finishing with last cake, then spread remaining cream cheese frosting over top and sides of cake with a hot palette knife. Refrigerate until required.
6. Serve cake with warmed salted caramel and extra brown sugar crumb for scattering.

NOTE: If you don't have three 18cm cake tins, bake a third of the cake mixture at a time, washing, buttering and lining the tin each time.

REFERENCE: <https://www.gourmettraveller.com.au/recipe/dessert/salted-caramel-layer-cake-12599/>