

## Millennium Shortbread

Such a good old fashioned staple from the baking world, and most of us know it as Millionaires shortbread or Caramel slice. However, in this ever-changing world of baking we find ourselves looking for new alternatives, especially with some of us turning or choosing non-dairy bakes. This maybe out of choice or because of medical reasons but we don't want to substitute taste or an exciting range. Hence Millennium shortbread, it encompasses all what we need for a new fresh and alternative look at some of the bakes we love so dearly in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

A least a day before you make the Millennium Slice you need to make the condensed milk.

To make about 400g of condensed milk you will need:

700 mls / 25fl oz dairy free milk (I used coconut) must be full fat  
200g sugar  
100g plant or dairy free butter  
2 teaspoons of vanilla extract.

### Method

Put all the above ingredients into a pan and simmer until the sugar and butter have melted.

Let the mixture boil, (keep an eye on it so that it doesn't boil over) it needs to be more than simmering but not a high heat with an excessive rolling boil. Somewhere in between will allow the mixture to reduce. This mixture needs to reduce by half, this could take up to an hour but most probably about 45 minutes.

Sorry this method sounds vague, but it will depend on how hot the heat, how fast the boil and the exact quantity of liquid.

Stir the boiling mixture from time to time so that it does not stick on the bottom of the pan. (Little brown bits in the finished product is not a good look!!)

When the mixture has reduced it will NOT look thick and will appear darker than the tinned variety. Don't worry, the mixture will thicken as it cools and left overnight in the fridge it will be exactly like you want it.

This condensed milk will keep for about 5 days in the fridge.

### Base

250g plain flour  
75g caster sugar  
175g plant butter

### For the Caramel

100g plant butter

100g soft brown sugar (light or dark depends on you for the flavour)

400g coconut condensed milk

### Topping

200g vegan chocolate

1 table spoon golden syrup.

### Method

Pre heat the oven to 180c 160c fan or gas 4

Lightly grease and line a 20 x 22cm baking tin with a height of about 3cm.

Knead the base ingredients together, until it all becomes to a soft smooth ball, this is best if the butter is room temperature.

Press this mixture into the base of the tin. Take a little time to get it nice and even, prick the base with a fork and let it rest for 30 minutes before baking in the oven until a light golden brown, this will take about 20 – 25 minutes.

Once cooked leave this base to cool completely.

### For the Caramel

Simply combine all the ingredients for the caramel in a pan and leave over a low heat until the sugar and butter have melted.

Bring the mixture to the boil and stir frequently. Its not a good idea to go away and leave this mixture as it will soon burn or boil over (such a mess on your stove top!!!)

Let this mixture boil for 5 -10 minutes (I left it for 10 minutes) this will darken the caramel and intensify the flavour. But most importantly it will determine the setting of the caramel so that it slices well.

Once the caramel has boiled remove it from the heat and carefully pour it over the shortbread base. Leave to cool and harden, this will take a couple of hours.

### Topping

In a basin set over a pan of simmering water, (do not let the basin touch the water) melt the chocolate with the golden syrup, (using the syrup will allow

the chocolate to cut easily and not be too brittle. )If you are making dairy free but not Vegan, then you could use honey instead of golden syrup. Spread the melted chocolate over the caramel and smooth evenly over the top. Leave to cool. Cut into squares using a warm knife just before the chocolate completely sets hard.