



## Hooked on food ireland

Sandra O'Callaghan - Not just another foodie  
Exciting store cupboard ingredients & recipes that work!

DECEMBER 3, 2012 · 4:57 PM

# Snow-capped salty chocolate squares aka Rocky Road

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This recipe is my take on a no-bake treat, delicious with a steaming, fragrant cup of your favourite coffee. A little goes a long way so it does last a lot longer than other treats. It takes only as long as the chocolates takes to melt and then some setting time in the fridge. A perfect Christmas gift in a cellophane bag tied with a red ribbon. The amount of squares depends on the size you cut your squares – that's up to you.



100g 70% chocolate

100g good quality milk chocolate

100g salted peanuts

200g butter – cubed

3 honeycomb bars - roughly chopped (I used crunchies)

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## Easy food for the weekend

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## Sandra O Callaghan

- [@ghook](#) George My Mother was O'Callaghan, married Michael O'Callaghan, I was of

## Icing sugar to dust

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Get a small saucepan on a low heat with some boiling water from the kettle. Put a heatproof bowl on top, but not touching the water below. Break your chocolate into the bowl along with the butter to melt gently. Remove the bowl from the heat and add the peanuts and crunchies. Stir well until combined. Pop this into the fridge until set – at least two hours. Remove then and turn out onto a board. Remove greaseproof paper, dust with icing sugar from a small sieve and cut into squares. Store in a cool place, covered, and enjoy!

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OCTOBER 31, 2012 · 6:16 PM

course O'Callaghan and went on to marry Antoin 'O

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A bit about me

# Chocolate gingerbread with gooey chocolate caramel icing

★★★★☆ 3 Votes

**A tray-bake is always a winner as it goes a long way and this one is a hard-to-beat recipe. It ticks all the boxes of deliciousness, gooeyness and cut-an-come-again temptation. Also, and this is always a bonus, it is all done in a saucepan on the hob! A one pot wonder, you might say.**

**First set your oven to 180C / 350F / Gas 4**

**Grease and line a 30 x 20cm / 12 x 8" tin with greaseproof paper**

**Into a medium saucepan put the following:**

150g / 5½ oz butter

125g / 4½ oz muscovado sugar

200g / 7 oz golden syrup

200g / 7 oz treacle

4 tbsps ground ginger

2 tbsp mixed spice



Sandra O'Callaghan

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In an earlier life I had a catering business focusing mainly on dinner-party entertaining, which was great fun. I eat, sleep, breathe, blog and dream about ingredients, recipes, provenance, suppliers and more. (Ask my husband!) I cook all cuisines and rarely follow a recipe. The premise for my dishes is a very well stocked larder. If you follow that you will always have inspirational cooking just minutes away. I never use food additives and MSG is 'the enemy'!! There are so many natural food 'enhancers' available to us now and I look forward to sharing some ideas with you. Never be afraid to experiment - although the exception to this is the baking arena, where measurements are usually critical to the outcome. Above all, have fun and you will win many a heart along the way!

#feelthefearanddoitanyway!!

Regarding Gm trials: The EPA have given Teagasc permission to field GM trials in 2013. If you feel that you would like to support a stance for keeping Ireland GM free, then please send your contact details to: [irishfreerange@yahoo.com](mailto:irishfreerange@yahoo.com)

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**Heat gently while stirring, until the butter has melted.**

**Remove from heat to add the following:**

100g / 4 oz dark chocolate – 70% cocoa solids

Stir until melted. Then add:

200 ml / 7 fluid oz milk

1tsp bicarbonate of soda (bread soda) dissolved in 2 tbsp tepid water

**To this mixture add:**

300g / 11oz plain flour

**Use a whisk to combine into a smooth batter. Pour into the prepared tin and bake for 35 mins until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Allow to cool for 10 mins in the tin. Then invert onto a cooling rack and remove paper. Allow to cool completely. Then lift the gingerbread (carefully) back into the tin for icing.**



For the icing:

Put some boiling water from the kettle into a small saucepan. Put a medium heat-proof bowl on top. Make sure the bowl does not touch the water.

Put 100g / 3½ oz of 70% dark chocolate into the bowl and melt on a gentle heat.

Meanwhile sieve 350g / 12½ ounces of icing sugar and 10 tbsp of cocoa powder into a bowl.

**Remove the chocolate from the heat and saucepan and pour into the sugar and cocoa. Then mix in 397g / 14 oz tin of Carnation caramel (dulce de leche). Stir well to combine. What you are looking for is a pouring consistency. If the mix is too stiff it won't spread, so at that point you can add a little milk to slacken the mixture. Only add a little at a time, to get the desired effect. Pour this onto the cooled gingerbread and spread it so it falls over the top and sides. Leave to set for a couple of hours, if you can resist the temptation. Cut into slices and enjoy with your favourite tea or coffee. I guarantee you will want to make this again and again.**



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AUGUST 24, 2012 · 4:45 PM

## Pork tenderloin cassoulet with tomatoes



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Having pre-soaked some pulses last night, I decided, to invent an easy, heart-warming cassoulet, using pork fillet. The longest part is cooking the pulses for about 45 minutes or so, on the hob with water to cover and a large onion, or microwave for about a half an hour **Otherwise, using canned beans is a great option.** Ingredients: 250g beans of choice I used butter beans and black-eyed beans for their creaminess. 1 large onion 1 clove of garlic 1 medium pork tenderloin or pork steak, well trimmed of any sinew and fat. 1 tub crème fraîche 1 400g tin of good quality tomatoes 1 small glass of white wine (optional) 1 tbsp white wine vinegar works as well.

Basil and parsley Oil for cooking



For 4 people: 250g/8½ ozs assorted beans – Soaked in water overnight Cook on a hob in water with an onion for 45 mins or microwave for ½hr. **N.B. No salt at this stage as it will only toughen the beans.** Drain and set aside covered for use later. Sweat an onion gently in a little oil until soft then add a grated clove of garlic and cook for a minute or two (once you start using a fine microplane-type grater for garlic you will never look back) I use Cuisipro, not expensive. Remove to a plate. Trim your pork fillet or tenderloin of any sinew and slice in rounds about 1cm thick. Turn up the hob to a high heat. Add two tsps of oil. When hot add the slices of pork taking care not to overcrowd the pan. You are looking for a nice brown caramelization on both sides, so better to do in two batches rather than have the meat *stew* and look anaemic. Remember, we eat with our eyes too.



When the meat is done, add back the onion, garlic and beans. If you have some white wine handy, add a small glass now, adding lots of flavour. Let it bubble to reduce slightly and burn off the alcohol. Then add a tub of crème fraîche and the tomatoes, stirring to mix. Cover and turn down the heat and let everything come to temperature for about ten minutes. Season with salt and black pepper to taste. Please – do taste! If the tomatoes are a bit bitter, adding just a pinch of sugar will remedy this. At the last-minute add some chopped basil and parsley and serve with plain boiled rice or some steamed fluffy potatoes or indeed some lemony couscous. Enjoy!

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[one pot](#), [pork](#), [pulses](#), [quick food](#)

JULY 31, 2012 · 4:06 PM

## Prosecco Jelly with raspberries

# or fruit of your choice

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Summer delight!

This is possibly the easiest dessert you will ever make, if you discount the overnight chilling time. I had an opened bottle of prosecco from last night, minus one glass, and was wondering what to do with it, other than drinking it for the sake of it – not a good look at breakfast hic! And so here we go,

1 pint / 570mls of liquid (Prosecco in this case)

4 sheets of gelatine (5 if you want a very stiff set)

Berries of your choice

Put the gelatine leaves in a bowl of cold water to cover for five minutes.

Pour the Prosecco into a small saucepan on a gentle heat; you don't want it to boil. When the five minutes are up, take the gelatine in your hand and squeeze out all the cold water and add it to the saucepan. Stir until completely dissolved – about two minutes. Take off the heat and cool for ten minutes.

Meanwhile, take four 5oz glasses. Fill up with your berries and pour the liquid over. Put into the fridge to chill overnight or until set. Enjoy!



The gelatine leaves I used were from Dr Oetker which you will find in the baking section of all major supermarkets.



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JULY 3, 2012 · 3:09 PM

# Mascarpone cream tart – A simple desert with the ‘wow factor’

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This is a desert I devised one day when I needed a top-notch pudd that only required assembling time. I almost always keep an unbaked pastry shell in the freezer which only requires baking and cooling for this tart. Your friends will be so impressed!

This quantity of pastry will be enough for 3/4 bases, depending on the size of your tin. If you don't want to put a tin in the freezer, you can freeze the pastry divided into portions wrapped well in a freezer bag.

500g plain flour

100g castor sugar

250g butter – hard from fridge

2 large eggs – beaten lightly

Zest of a lemon

A splash of milk

Into a magimix / foodprocessor put flour, sugar, zest and butter. Mix until it resembles crumbs and then add eggs and milk. Mix until the pastry comes together. Wrap in clingfilm and put in the fridge for an hour or so. Depending on the size of your tin, take a portion off and roll out to fit, making sure it is well greased. Bake at 180°C/350F for 35 minutes or until golden brown.



**Filling (For a 25cm crust)**

1 tub of mascarpone cheese

250mls cream

½ jar of good quality lemon curd

Icing sugar to taste

Zest of a lemon and lime

Small punnet of raspberries or berry of choice

Spread the lemon curd onto the base of the cooled tart shell.

Combine cheese, cream, sugar and mix until you achieve a spreading consistency. Spread neatly over the lemon curd. Then finely grate zest over cream mix and decorate with berries. Stand back and wait for the compliments!

Tip: For those watching their calorie count you can use light mascarpone cheese and Avonmore cooking cream (50% less fat) without affecting the taste. Why should you miss out on a treat!

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JUNE 26, 2012 · 4:38 PM

## Out of my comfort zone – belly pork

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A few years ago I ordered belly of pork at a rather smart restaurant with lots of awards on the wall outside the premises. It was probably the most awful meal I ever had, and that's saying something. It was nothing more than mouthfuls of pure fat – no meat content whatever. Of course I didn't complain, as I was clearly intimidated by all those important awards. Sometimes we don't trust our gut reaction (no pun intended) to something that doesn't live up to our expectation, like a meal or service. Rather, we put our faith in those we *assume* to know better than we do about such things.

I think today, we are probably better informed through our diverse experiences, as we travel in an ever-shrinking world. To that end, I found myself staring at a very meaty piece of belly pork last weekend at my butchers and decided to bite the bullet and right a wrong-taste experience for myself.



To say the experience was life-changing is probably gilding the lily a bit, but it is close enough. Here's what I did.

I scored the skin with a sharp craft knife and scalded it with boiling

water to ensure good crackling. Then I wiped it dry and baked uncovered in a high oven for 30 minutes. Next, I turned the temperature way down to 100°C for four hours. The result was unctuous meat that I could pull apart with two forks – a sublime eating treat and I couldn't stop nibbling. Now I know what real pork scratchings should taste like – that crispy crackling was a delight. The real deal.

My faith has been renewed in belly pork and I encourage you to try it for yourself. You will not be disappointed. I guarantee it!



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MAY 24, 2012 · 3:02 PM

## Spiced carrot cake with vanilla mascarpone cream

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Pre-heat oven to 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4

Grease or oil a round 22cm loose-bottomed tin

**In a bowl put:**

230g / 10 oz self raising flour

1 tsp baking powder

3 tbsp ground ginger (yes really!)

1 tbsp mixed spice

230g / 10 oz muscovado sugar

100g / 3½ oz finely chopped almonds (or nut of choice)

Mix well

Add 230g / 10 oz coarsely grated carrots

**To a jug add:**

155 ml / 5¼ fl. oz sunflower oil (or Donegal rapeseed oil, if you can get it – superior stuff)

3 medium free-range eggs (if poss)

1 tbsp molasses or treacle

Mix all wet ingredients with a small whisk. Pour over other ingredients and mix until well combined.

Bake in oven for 1 hour and 10 minutes, checking with a skewer after an hour. If the skewer comes out clean, then the cake is done!



### For the cream topping:

In a bowl put 200g / 7oz each, of cream cheese and mascarpone. Mix until soft and creamy. Then add either 1tbsp vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract. The bean paste gives lovely flecks to the finished cream. Using a spatula, spread all over the cake, being as swirly as you dare! Enjoy!

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