

## Spiced Plum Bars for a Crowd

With plums that ooze and collapse under heat and a tender cookie crust, this sheet pan recipe has a wow-factor that justifies its up-front work. You'll even get a bonus: extra plum syrup to drizzle over your morning yogurt.

A few notes: Plan ahead! The bars need to chill overnight so the juices set up and the bars cut neatly. Also, I have a [5-quart Kitchen-Aid stand mixer](#), so I made this crust in one fell swoop. If you have a smaller mixer, you may need to work in batches. I also roast the plums in two separate rectangular Pyrex baking dishes. My oven can accommodate the crust and the two plum dishes all at once on three racks, but if your oven's smaller, roast the plums once the crust comes out. Finally, this recipe makes a ton. Feel free to cut it in half and bake the bars in a smaller vessel.

Makes about 50 small bars

For the crust:

1 pound (4 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus more for greasing the baking dishes  
2 cups light brown sugar  
6 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon salt

For the filling:

6 pounds plums and/or pluots, preferably a mix of colors and varieties, pitted, quartered  
1 tablespoon melted butter  
1-1/4 cups granulated sugar  
3/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom

Confectioners' sugar, for serving

Prep. Preheat the oven to 350°F with three racks evenly spaced in the oven, if possible. (If you don't have three racks, you may cook the crust first and the fruit once the crust comes out.) Line a rimmed half-sheet pan (18 x 13 x 1) with parchment. Rub a bit of butter along the bottom of two ovenproof glass baking dishes. (Rectangular Pyrexes work great if you have them.)

Make the crust. In the bowl of a stand mixer, cream the butter and brown sugar on medium speed. Reduce the speed to the lowest setting ("stir" on mine), and add the flour and salt in 3 additions, pulsing them in. Some will probably fly out of your mixer. Toss it back in or wipe it up later. It's okay! Work in the flour in this way for a minute or two, until large, even clumps form and the batter looks smooth. Drop big handfuls of batter over the prepared half-sheet pan. Using your hands, slowly press it along the bottom and

up the rims, creating a little ledge as you go. I use the bottom of a metal cup measure to tamp down the dough. Work slowly, and get it as even as you can. You can pop it in the lowest rack of the oven right away or wait until you've prepped the fruit. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until firm and golden brown. Cool completely.

Meanwhile, make the filling. In a large bowl, toss the fruit, melted butter, cinnamon, and cardamom. Divide among the two Pyrex baking dishes, scraping in any juices. Bake for about 50 minutes, stirring once or twice, until very soft and the juices bubble vigorously. I start it at 350°F while the crust bakes, and once the crust comes out I up the temp to 375°F for the last few minutes. This concentrates the juices. Cool completely.

Assemble. Once the crust and filling are completely cool, use a slotted spoon to transfer the fruit onto the crust in a single layer. Refrigerate overnight, uncovered. (The substantial leftover juices may be tipped into a jar and refrigerated, where they will thicken into a lovely sauce for spooning over your morning yogurt.) The next day, cut the cold bars into 2" squares. I place them on cupcake-liners. Sprinkle with powdered sugar just before serving.