

## Rocky Road Shortbread Bars

Makes 2 dozen bars

### Crust

- 1 cup (16 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 1/3 cups King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour

### Topping

- 3 cups chopped semisweet or dark chocolate or chocolate chips
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup pecans, toasted and chopped
- 3 cups (half a 10.5-ounce package) mini marshmallows

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 300°F. Lightly grease 9" x 13" pan, or line with parchment and grease the parchment.
2. To make the crust: In medium bowl, beat together butter, sugar, salt, and vanilla, then beat in flour. The dough will seem very dry, and won't seem to want to become cohesive at first. Just keep beating, and it'll eventually come together. Press dough into prepared pan, smoothing surface with your fingers or mini rolling pin. Dough will feel stiff, but just keep pressing on it until you've covered bottom of pan. Prick dough all over with a fork; this will keep it from bubbling up as it bakes.
3. Bake crust for 35 to 40 minutes, until golden brown around edges and beginning to brown on top. Remove from oven, and loosen edges with heat-resistant plastic knife or table knife.
4. To make the topping: While shortbread cools, place chocolate and cream in microwave-safe bowl, or in saucepan. Heat in microwave, or over low heat on a burner, until cream is steaming and barely beginning to form bubbles. Remove from heat and stir. Chocolate will gradually form a lump in center of bowl, then will start to expand as it absorbs the cream. Eventually chocolate and cream will become one; keep stirring until it's very smooth. If all the chocolate doesn't seem melted, reheat very briefly, and keep stirring.
5. Spread warm chocolate atop cookie crust. Sprinkle with marshmallows, then pecans. Cover pan and place bars in refrigerator for 15 to 20 minutes to set chocolate a bit. Using a sharp knife or baker's bench knife, cut into 2" bars. Wrap any leftovers airtight, and store at room temperature for up to a week.

**\*Please bring 6 bars, wrapped, on a plate.**