Salted Caramel Brownies
Makes a 9x9 pan

Note: I halved the original recipe because I certainly didn't need a 9x13 pan; if you're making for a large crowd, just double the recipe. Two tablespoons plus 2 teaspoon is half of 1/3 cup.

Update: I've had a few comments about the remaining brownie batter being a little stiff to work with after the first layer of brownies have baked and cooled. To remedy this, microwave the remaining batter for 5-10 seconds until it's spreadable again.

1/2 cup butter
6 ounces bittersweet chocolate chips or coarsely chopped
3/4 cups sugar
2 eggs
1/2 tablespoon vanilla
1/2 cup + 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon table salt
7 ounces caramel candies, unwrapped (half of a 14 ounce bag)
2 tablespoons + 2 teaspoons heavy whipping cream
1/2-3/4 teaspoon sea salt, divided

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9x9 pan with aluminum foil, leaving a few inches hanging over the sides (this foil will turn into handles to lift the brownies out of the pan later). Spray the foil generously with nonstick spray, paying special attention to the corners and sides.

In a microwave-safe bowl, melt the stick of butter. Add the chocolate and let sit for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Stir and if the chocolate isn't fully melted, microwave for 30-second intervals until smooth, stirring in between.

In a mixing bowl, mix together sugar, eggs, and vanilla until incorporated. Add in the butter/chocolate and mix until thick and glossy (about a minute). Stir in the flour and table salt until just combined.

Pour half this mixture into the greased pan and spread to corners. Bake for 20 minutes and let cool for 20 minutes.

Place the caramels, cream, and 1/4 teaspoon sea salt in a microwave-safe bowl and

heat in 30-second intervals, stirring in between, until smooth and creamy. Pour this caramel over the cooked brownies and spread to the corners. Pour the rest of the brownie mixture evenly over the caramel (don't dump it all in the middle or it will be hard to spread) and spread to the corners. Sprinkle 1/4-1/2 teaspoon of sea salt on top of the brownie batter. Bake for 18-20 minutes or until the center is set. Cool completely before lifting the foil out of the pan.

Adapted from The Pastry Queen Cookbook.

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