

# Strawberries and Cream Bars

## Ingredients

- 1 cup (2 sticks) plus 2 tbsps. unsalted butter, divided, softened
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tps. vanilla
- 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 3 cups uncooked old-fashioned oats
- 1 package (1.2 oz.) freeze-dried strawberries, divided
- 1 package (11 oz.) white chocolate chips
- 1 can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk

## Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Grease bottom and sides of a 9x13 baking dish with shortening or nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a mixer, beat 1 cup butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, until well blended. Mix in vanilla.
3. Whisk together flour and baking soda, then gradually add to wet ingredients. Stir in oats until thoroughly coated.
4. Evenly spread  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the oat batter into the prepared baking dish, pressing down with a lightly greased scraper. Then spread  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the freeze-dried strawberries evenly over the batter.
5. Crush the remaining strawberries into small chunks and powder. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine and crushed strawberries, 2 tablespoons butter, white chocolate chips and sweetened condensed milk. Melt over medium-low heat, stirring constantly until all ingredients are incorporated and smooth.
6. Pour chocolate mixture over strawberry layer evenly. Dollop the top with remaining oat batter.
7. Bake about 25 minutes, or until topping is lightly browned. Cool completely, then chill in the refrigerator until the chocolate layer hardens before slicing into bars.

*Yields about 24 bars*