

Roses are Red Velvet Layer Bars

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY CARA LANZ

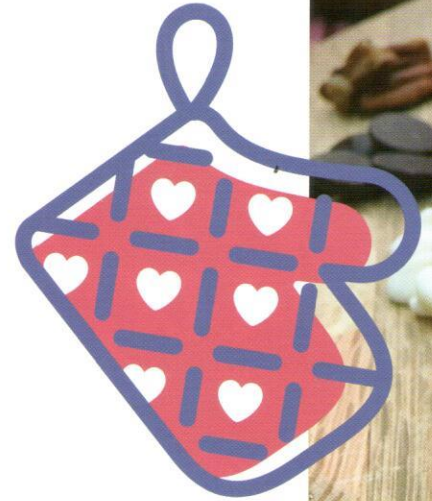
HERE IN LAKE COUNTRY, THERE IS NO BETTER WAY TO SHOW OUR LOVE THAN BY SHARING A PAN OF BARS.

Like a good hot dish, a pan of bars comes together quickly with basic ingredients, warms your house while it bakes, and is easily transportable in your 9- by 13-inch pan—with a lid and your name written on it, if it's your good one.

This quintessential Midwestern dish may be the workhorse of all desserts, but don't be fooled by its humble appearance. Hidden deep beneath that unpretentious exterior are rich and decadent flavors, simple enough for sharing with your neighbor, yet special enough to serve on Valentine's Day.

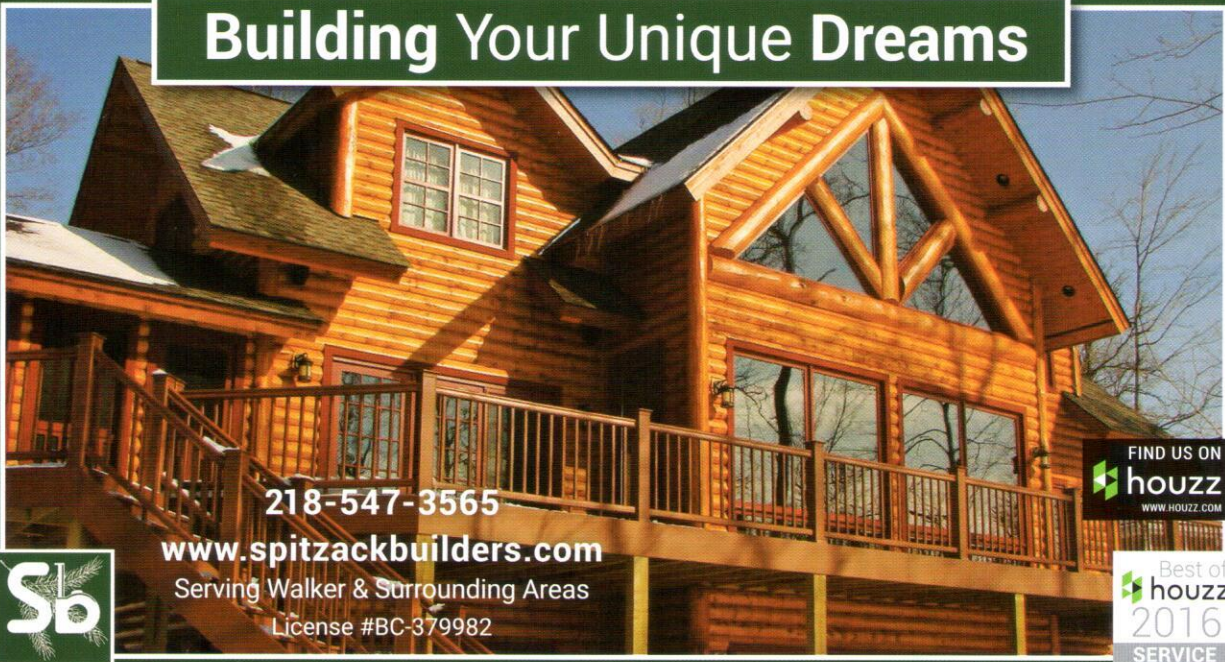
Take these Roses are Red Velvet Layer Bars. The coy smile of the pretzel fish is sure to catch your sweetheart's eye, while the luscious layers of chocolate, coconut, pecans, and luxurious red velvet cake will reel 'em in—hook, line, and sinker.

Someone not from around here might call them scrumptious, but here we just say they're pretty good.



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♥ **INGREDIENTS**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 box red velvet cake mix | 1 cup pecan pieces |
| 1 egg | 1/2 cup white chocolate chips |
| 1 stick butter, softened | 2 cups coconut |
| 1 can sweetened condensed milk | 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips |
| | 1/2 cup fish-shaped pretzels |

♥ **DIRECTIONS**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 9- by 13-inch pan with cooking spray.

In a large bowl, mix cake mix, egg, and butter. Pat cake mixture evenly in pan and bake for 15 minutes.

Pour sweetened condensed milk evenly over cake. Add layers of pecans, white chocolate chips, coconut, dark chocolate chips, and pretzels, in that order. Gently press the chocolate chips and pretzels into the coconut.

Bake for 25–30 minutes or until coconut is brown and the center is firm. Let cool completely and cut into bars.

Front Porch continued on page 14

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