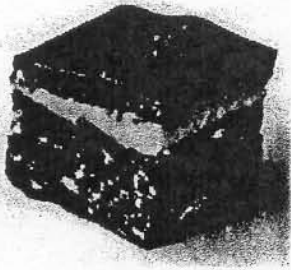


The Story of Nanaimo Bars – More Than You Ever Wanted to Know!



A nanaimo bar

According to David's Recipes, "Nanaimo Bars are valuable educational tools! Have your students or children make Nanaimo Bars with you and teach them principles of stratigraphy!"

Photo and a class-size recipe w/lower-fat and thinner middle layer) is available at David's Recipes: <http://phylgeny.arizona.edu/tree/drm/recipes/nanaimo.html>

There is some mystery concerning who created the recipe for this delicious no-bake dessert and dubbed them "Nanaimo Bars". You'd be surprised to know that debate continues—just check out websites such as <http://expage.com/page/nanaimobar> to see!

According to the expage website above, some say the recipe goes back to the 1930s, perhaps from a recipe called Chocolate Fridge Cake that may have appeared in the *Vancouver Sun*. Despite searches by employees of the *Vancouver Sun*, no evidence yet supports this connection, or at least it has not gone under the name "Nanaimo Bar(s)." Others hold that it comes from New York in the 1930s. Still others say it goes back to the coal-mining days of early Nanaimo, when it was sent to the miners from their friends and relatives in the United Kingdom as a gift; once more, no evidence is available to support this theory. The miners who came to the west coast of Canada were, for the most part, from Northern England, and no recipe like Nanaimo Bar can be traced to these locations. In short, this coal-mining connection is almost certainly legend rather than fact, and suited to promote Nanaimo's heritage. Still others believe that Dutch settlers brought the recipe to Nanaimo in the early 1900s but no evidence has been found to support this "suspect origin".

Thus far, the first known publication of a recipe called "Nanaimo Bars" is c. 1957-58. A recipe for the three-layered bar by Joy Willgress appears in "Favorite Recipes, Compiled by the Women's Association of the Brechin United Church" in Nanaimo, B.C. An identical recipe, submitted by Jeanne Murray, (with the ingredients listed in the same order) called "Nanaimo Bars" was also published in 1958 in the "Centennial Cook Book" compiled by the Welland Jaycettes (Ontario, Canada). In 1986, a contest was held by a Nanaimo newspaper to find "the best Nanaimo Bar maker in Nanaimo." The winning recipe, submitted by Joyce Hardcastle is the one that many Nanaimo Bar recipes are based on or copied from (although it is not quite the same as the Willgress recipe.) The contest organizers made no mention of the earlier "Willgress" or "Murray" recipe. They were likely unaware of it. So, at this point, the evidence point towards the c. 1957-58 recipe as being the origin of the recipe with the name being later dubbed by Murray.

But who cares about the controversy? Turn the page for the recipe and try some!