

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Bake Time: 20-25 minutes
- Chilling Time: 45 minutes
- Total Time: 1 hour 25 minutes
- Yield: 16 bars (8×8 inch pan)
- Cooking Intensity Level: Low to Moderate
 - *Technique:* Requires basic mixing, layer pressing, and gentle stovetop melting (or microwave tempering) for the chocolate top layer. No advanced pastry skills needed.

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Equipment Needed

- 8×8-inch square baking pan
- Parchment paper
- Medium mixing bowl
- Heatproof bowl (or double boiler setup)
- Rubber spatula
- Measuring cups and spoons

Ingredients

Coconut Layer

- 3 cups (270g) sweetened shredded coconut

- 1/2 cup (120ml) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp fine sea salt

Chocolate Layer

- 1 1/2 cups (225g) semi-sweet or dark chocolate chips (60–70% cocoa recommended)
- 2 tbsp (30g) unsalted butter or refined coconut oil
- 1/2 tsp instant espresso powder (*optional, enhances chocolate flavor*)

Optional Toppings

- 2 tbsp unsweetened toasted coconut flakes
- Flaky sea salt for finishing

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prep & Preheat

Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Line an 8×8-inch baking pan with parchment paper, leaving an overhang on two sides to act as a sling for easy removal later. Lightly grease the paper with non-stick spray or a touch of coconut oil.

Step 2: Mix the Coconut Base

In a medium bowl, combine the shredded coconut, sweetened condensed milk, room temperature egg, vanilla extract, and salt. Stir thoroughly with a spatula until the coconut is completely coated and the mixture holds together when pressed.

Step 3: Press & Bake

Transfer the coconut mixture into the prepared baking pan. Using the back of a spatula or clean hands, press the mixture down firmly into an even, compact layer.

Bake at 350°F (175°C) for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the edges are golden brown and the top is set. Remove from the oven and let cool completely on a wire rack for about 20 minutes before adding the topping.

Step 4: Melt the Chocolate

Set a heatproof bowl over a small pot of simmering water (double boiler setup), ensuring the bottom of the bowl does not touch the water. Add the chocolate chips, butter (or coconut oil), and espresso powder. Stir continuously over low heat until completely smooth and glossy. Alternatively, microwave in 30-second bursts, stirring between each burst until melted.

Step 5: Layer, Chill, & Slice

Pour the warm chocolate glaze over the cooled coconut layer. Use an offset spatula to spread it evenly to the edges. Sprinkle with toasted coconut flakes and a pinch of flaky sea salt if desired.

Transfer the pan to the refrigerator and chill for at least 45 minutes, or until the chocolate is firm. Lift the bars out of the pan using the parchment handles, place on a cutting board, and slice into 16 equal squares using a sharp knife dipped in hot water and wiped dry.

Chef's Tips & Variations

- **Clean Cuts:** To prevent the chocolate layer from cracking when slicing, let the chilled pan sit at room temperature for 5 minutes before cutting. Wipe the knife blade clean between each cut.
- **Make It Vegan:** Substitute the sweetened condensed milk with sweetened condensed coconut milk, use a flax egg (1 tbsp flaxseed meal + 2.5 tbsp water) or 2 tbsp maple syrup instead of the chicken egg, and select dairy-free chocolate chips.
- **Nutty Addition:** Fold 1/2 cup of finely chopped toasted almonds into the coconut layer for an Almond Joy-style variation.

Storage & Shelf Life

- **Refrigerator:** Store in an airtight container lined with parchment paper for up to 10 days.

- Freezer: Wrap individual bars tightly in plastic wrap and store in a freezer-safe bag for up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight before serving.

Nutritional Information

Servings: 16 bars | Portion Size: 1 bar (approx. 45g)

Nutrient	Amount per Serving
Calories	215 kcal
Total Fat	13g
Saturated Fat	9g
Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	18mg
Sodium	65mg
Total Carbohydrates	24g
Dietary Fiber	2.5g
Total Sugars	19g
Protein	3g
Calcium	38mg
Iron	1.2mg