

# Steal this recipe



**Leah Eskin**  
Home on  
the Range

The young criminal launches her career in the grocery store, where she trails the shopping cart and the shopping parent. There, between apple display and pear bin, rises a mountain of yellow candy. Positioned, oddly, at young-eye height. And within young hand's reach. She reaches, delighting in the candy's cellophane crinkle. She slips it into her mouth, then out. Butterscotch, she learns, tastes corn-syrup, fake-butter awful. Crime, she learns, doesn't pay.

The reformed outlaw, having matured to her teenage years, learns to bake the chewy chocolate-studded blondie. "Try butterscotch," her friends goad. "Like chocolate, only blond." Yielding to peer pressure, she makes the switch. One bite yields the truth: The butterscotch chip is whey-laced, partially hydrogenated awful.

In her college years, she develops an affinity for the foil-wrapped square of imported toffee, which is the harder, fancier form of the butter-and-brown-sugar confection. Afraid of awful, she avoids association with butterscotch.

Not until well into adulthood does she brave butterscotch again. Out one night, she poaches a spoonful of butterscotch pudding. It's shockingly delicious. It tastes of butter. And — thrillingly — scotch.

Is this, she wonders, true butterscotch? The hamburger lacks ham. The doughnut lacks nut. But is butterscotch the happy amalgamation of butter and scotch?

She turns to the authorities, who claim this "scotch" refers to scoring or "scotching" the sweet. Not one to think too literally, she discards this theory and cooks up a renegade pudding sweetened with caramel, thick with butter and soothed by Scotch whisky. So good, it's practically criminal.

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## Caramel butterscotch pudding

**Prep:** 15 minutes **Cook:** 20 minutes  
**Chill:** 3 hours **Makes:** 12 servings

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup whipping cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dark brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 3 cups whole milk
- 4 egg yolks
- $\frac{3}{4}$  stick (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cut up
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon Scotch whisky

**1 Caramelize:** Pour granulated sugar and water in a saucepan. Stir over medium heat until sugar dissolves, 2 minutes. Turn heat to high; boil, without stirring, until mixture turns a deep golden brown, 5 minutes. Pull pan off heat; carefully pour in cream (mixture will foam up). Stir smooth.

**2 Boil:** Measure brown sugar, cornstarch and salt into another saucepan. Whisk in milk. Stir over medium heat until thick and bubbling, 5 minutes. Pull off heat. Whisk in caramel.

**3 Thicken:** Whisk egg yolks. Temper by slowly whisking in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup warm pudding mixture. Whisk yolk mixture into remaining pudding mixture. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Whisk in the butter, vanilla and whiskey.

**4 Chill:** Pour into 12 demitasses. Chill 3 hours. Serve with Scotch-whisky-spiked whipped cream.

**Provenance:** Adapted from "Salty Sweets," by Christie Matheson.