

Bar None

CANADA'S NO-BAKE TREAT STACKS UP

ASK A CANADIAN about his favorite dessert and “Nanaimo bar” (pronounced nuh-NYE-mo) is the likely reply. Named for the harbor town on Vancouver Island, the no-bake treat has sweetened the collective Canadian memory for decades. The three-layer dessert—a textured crust (chocolate, coconut, almonds, and butter) that is smothered with a vanilla custard middle and topped with a firm layer of chocolate—is assembled, refrigerated, then cut into squares. Vancouver Island’s coal mining families packed them in lunches. The first known recipe to use the name Nanaimo bar was published in the *Vancouver Sun’s* 1953 *Edith Adams’ Fourteenth Prize Cook Book*. The moniker stuck, and the ubiquitous bar is baked into the national culture. Nanaimo resident Joyce Hardcastle won a highly publicized competition in 1986 declaring her recipe the town’s “official” formula for a confection that now lures curious tourists from all over the country. “That’s why we added a Nanaimo bar exhibition,” says David Hill-Turner, curator of the **Nanaimo Museum**. For a tasty trek, pick up a **Nanaimo Bar Trail** map featuring over 25 toothsome stops around town, including the **Modern Café** for a Nanaimo bar martini. Traditionalists, however, may prefer **Mon Petit Choux**, where French pastries fight for attention next to Canada’s most beloved dessert. —KIMBERLEY LOVATO



Canada's creamy confection raises the bar with layers of chocolate and custard.