Coffeehouse Billionaire Bars

After Clare’s brash brushes with not one but two billionaires in Billionaire Blend, she dreamed up this multilayered treat for her coffeehouse customers. A classic shortbread base is topped with a chocolate-caramel layer. Next comes an easy hazelnut cream, and finally a layer of ganache with a kiss of coffee to deepen the chocolate. It’s a lavish combo of flavors and textures. If you enjoyed Clare’s story, she hopes you’ll also enjoy the culinary creation it inspired.

Homemade Coffee Liqueur

Make your own delicious coffee liqueur with this recipe. On the night of the Source Club dinner in Billionaire Blend, Matteo Allegro sees that his ex-wife needs something to calm her nerves (and his), so he whips up a drink for her using Clare’s homemade coffee liqueur. This sweet, spirited beverage is easy to make at home. It also makes a lovely gift, and Clare is happy to share her recipe.
Perfect Pumpkin Spice Muffins

When the chill of fall descends on New York, Clare’s customers demand the return of the Pumpkin Spice Latte to the Village Blend menu. Clare developed this recipe, (which bakes up perfect pumpkin spice muffins every time), as a celebration of her customers’ longstanding love of classic American fall flavors. There is even a hint of coffee: look for it in the sweet glaze topping (recipe included) along with a quick tip on making your own pumpkin pie spice.

Chocolate-Crusted Banana Bars

“Lovin’ from the oven” is how Matt described these fresh-baked squares, and he was right. The chocolate layer adds a nice twist to the traditional banana bar recipe. Clare adds a bit of earthy espresso powder to that bottom layer as well. Yes, she’s a coffee fiend, but here’s the truth: you won’t taste coffee, only a more powerful note of chocolate. Espresso powder is a baker’s secret to deepening the flavor of chocolate in recipes.

Crunchy Almond Biscotti
(Easy Food Processor Method)

Clare proudly served these goodies to her esteemed (and beloved) employer, Madame Dreyfus Allegro Dubois. Like the gelato makers of Sicily, Clare developed this recipe with the goal of making the cookie taste exactly like the star ingredient. Bite into these crunchy, twice-baked fingers and the fragrance and flavor of almond will envelope you. Dip them in chocolate and indulge in the classic combo of chocolate-covered almonds.

How to Make an Irish Car Bomb: On the night Detective Mike Quinn takes Clare to visit the NYPD Bomb Squad, he tells her the story of the first time he worked with the squad’s lieutenant, Dennis DeFasio. At the close of the case, DeFasio and his crew took Quinn to a pub for a night of Irish Car Bombs (the kind you drink). Get the recipe along with some interesting notes about this beverage. It make s one heck of an explosive serving.
Joy’s French Apple Cake Squares

These fragrant apple squares are the perfect treat for breakfast with a fresh cup of hot coffee. Joy Allegro developed the recipe for her mother’s coffeehouse. The alchemy of the oven gives the apple layer a custard-like texture while the top bakes up as a soft, sweet, sugar-crusted cake laced with the fragrances of vanilla and rum. As Clare likes to say to her customers, “When you take your first bite of these, you’ll know joy (and thank her)!”

“Billionaire” Baileys Irish Cream and Caramel-Nut Fudge

Yes, this is the very buttery caramel fudge (with an Irish Cream kick) that Clare used to bribe NYPD Bomb Squad Lieutenant DeFasio and his crew. That night, she made it in an 8-inch-square pan and cut it into bite-sized pieces for sharing. If you don’t expect to consume it in one night, however, Clare suggests making the fudge in a loaf pan. Then you can remove the fudge block, wrap it in plastic, and store it in the fridge. Over the course of many evenings, you can take out the block, cut off slices to enjoy with coffee, and rewrap it to keep fresh for the next time you’d like a wee nip of edible joy.

Buying Note: If you’re not a big drinker, simply buy 2 mini-bar bottles of Baileys. Inexpensive, single-serving bottles come in sizes of 50 milliliters, and 2 bottles will allow you to measure out the amount needed for this recipe. Or buy a larger bottle and keep it on hand for more recipes, like the one below...

Baileys Irish (Butter) Cream Frosting

This is one of Clare Cosi’s favorite go-to frostings when she’s making no-frills cupcakes for Mike. The frosting brings the party and the flavor. To get Clare’s “Irish Cream Poke Cake” recipe, a fantastic (and easy) “wow” of a party cake that will sit beautifully beneath this frosting, drop by author Cleo Coyle’s online coffeehouse at www.CoffeehouseMystery.com.
Clare Cosi’s Skillet Lasagna (for Mike)

On the night of the car bomb explosion, Clare was craving the comfort food of her childhood, namely her nonna’s hearty lasagna. Without the time (or energy) to make her grandmother’s many-layered casserole, she whipped up this quickie skillet version for herself and Detective Mike Quinn. Given Quinn’s interest in other kinds of comfort that night, they didn’t actually eat this meal for many hours after it was cooked. No worries. Clare Cosi’s Skillet Lasagna tastes even better as a leftover dish. “Heat and reheat”—good advice for this dinner, as well as Clare and Mike’s weekend-to-weekend relationship.

Matt Allegro’s Ugandan Chicken Stew with “Groundnuts” (Peanut Butter)

Matt introduced billionaire Eric Thorner to this fragrant, one-pot stew in Uganda, the first stop of their world coffee tour. Because this East African nation is landlocked with limited livestock and fisheries, groundnuts (aka peanuts) have become an important source of protein for Ugandans. Matt learned to prepare a version of this simple, hearty stew while staying in the home of a Ugandan friend. He especially enjoyed preparing it for Clare during the early years of their marriage, exciting his young wife’s taste buds with savory flavors while entertaining her with equally savory tales of his African travels.

Cleo Coyle’s Queso Fundido (Mexican Cheese Dip)

Because eating fundido is a whole lot of fun, one might get the impression that that’s where the name originated. In truth, queso fundido means “melted cheese” in Spanish. The dish, which combines the bubbly flavor of warm cheese with the bright, malty flavor of Mexican beer, originated along the borders of Northern Mexico and the Southwestern United States.
**Clare’s Billionaire “Twinkie” Cupcakes**

Clare Cosi’s dinner at the “zillionaire’s club” ended with no dessert, which meant Clare and Eric never had a chance to sample Chef Clarke Harvey’s “Billionaire Twinkie.” But her hankering for that golden cake with deliciously creamy filling wouldn’t go away, so Clare dug up her old “In the Kitchen with Clare” column recipe for “Copycat Twinkie” Cupcakes and baked them up for Eric’s staff. With this recipe of Clare’s, you can enjoy those cupcakes too.

*Matteo Allegro’s Espressotini:* An espressotini is an espresso martini. Given Matt’s lifelong relationship with coffee, this is one of his favorite cocktails, and he shares his recipe.

**Clare Cosi’s “Italian Beignets”**:

Clare’s grandmother used a basic dough to make a traditional recipe—a savory Italian snack called anchovy fritters. While Clare was not a fan of those, she flipped for these sweet, fried dough treats that her nonna also made from this dough. They taste like donuts but crispier; puff up like French beignets, but they’re not exactly that, either. Whatever you want to name them, once you taste them, you’ll call them delicious.

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**Billionaire Blend**:

A Coffeehouse Mystery

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