



The Sweet Book of CANDY MAKING

FROM THE SIMPLE TO THE SPECTACULAR—HOW TO MAKE CARAMELS,
FUDGE, HARD CANDY, FONDANT, TOFFEE, AND MORE!

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Elizabeth
LaBau

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CANDY MAKING**

* For Jason—the sweetest thing in my life. *

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FUDGE, HARD CANDY, FONDANT, TOFFEE, AND MORE!**

Elizabeth LaBau



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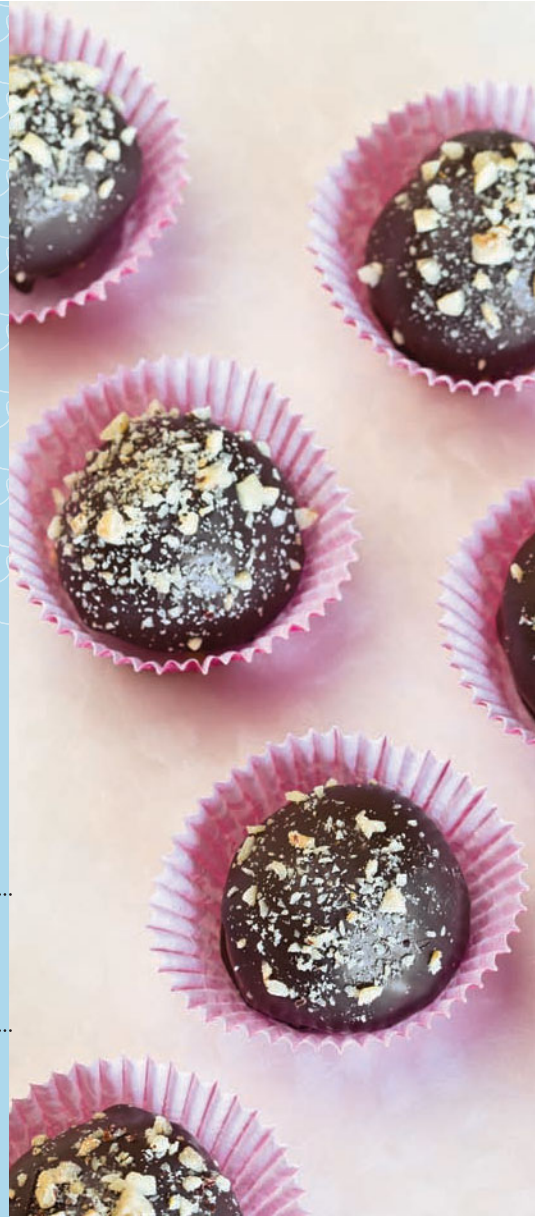
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Introduction

Some children collect baseball cards. Others collect dolls. When I was a child, I collected candy.

Every Halloween, I insisted on using an old pillowcase to gather my candy instead of a novelty candy bucket, because the pillowcase could hold so much more loot. It was thrilling to watch my candy collection grow as I roamed the neighborhood trick-or-treating, and I wouldn't stop knocking on doors until I could barely lift the pillowcase from the ground. After I shuffled home, hunched under the weight of my haul, I would carefully hide the candy in my room and hoard it like a miser for months. My goal was always to make it last until Easter, when I would receive a fresh supply of sweets.

Now that I am an adult, I have a greater appreciation for dark chocolate and less of a fondness for guzzling straight sugar, but not much else has changed. I still have an unapologetic love of candy, and if someone were to hand me a pillowcase full of chocolate today, I would gladly, gleefully, accept.

Fortunately, I am no longer dependent on the kindness of strangers to replenish my candy supply. In my job as a recipe developer, I am lucky enough to be able to make my own candy whenever a craving strikes. The basic thrill of simply eating sugar has been replaced by the joy of working with sugar to invent my own candy creations, and I hope to share this same joy with you.

Making candy at home is a magical process. Even after years of experience, it is still amazing to me that simply boiling a few ingredients together can produce luminous lollipops, and that whisking cream and chocolate together can yield soft, rich truffles. If you are new to candy making, some steps might seem intimidating, but I want to assure you that not only is it *possible* to make gorgeous, delicious, professional-quality candies in your home kitchen, but it is also *fun*.

Whether you are an experienced candy maker looking for new ideas and inspiration or a novice seeking a step-by-step candy-making guide, there is something in this book for you. Part I covers candy basics, beginning in chapter 1 with an

introduction to common candy ingredients and candy-making equipment. Chapter 2 will take you through some of the fundamental techniques for working with sugar and chocolate, like how to properly boil sugar and how to temper chocolate. You may be tempted to skip this chapter to get to the recipes faster—resist! Knowing these skills is crucial to candy-making success, and it is important to be comfortable with them.

Part II is where you'll find the recipes for everything from sugar candies to caramels, chocolates to marshmallows, toffees to truffles. I have included a mix of classic recipes and contemporary flavor combinations that are meant to get you started and spur your own imagination. As you master the basic techniques and foundational elements of each recipe, I hope you will be inspired to experiment with variations and create your own unique candy combinations.

Each recipe chapter also has a troubleshooting section that addresses common problems with that type of candy, and offers solutions. In my years of candy making I have had just about every kitchen failure you can imagine, and I probably even invented a few new ones. Making a failed batch of candy can be frustrating, and I want to save you from that same fate by pointing out potential trouble areas and typical mistakes.

Finally, when you are an expert candy maker, the only thing left is to gild the lily—or the chocolate, as it were—with fancy decorating techniques! Part III offers a variety of decorating ideas for creating beautiful and unique truffles, caramels, marshmallows, and more. There are also recipes that use sugar and chocolate skills from previous chapters to make edible garnishes like spun sugar and chocolate bowls.

After you have spent time cooking from this book, I hope you will be inspired to grab your metaphorical pillowcase and fill it with candy recipes you love and want to add to your personal collection!





Part I:

GETTING STARTED

Chapter 1: Ingredients and Candy-Making Equipment

Chapter 2: Candy-Making Techniques

Ingredients and Candy-Making Equipment



* Ingredients *

One of the easiest things you can do to ensure excellent candies is to use fresh, quality ingredients. Before you clutch your wallet in horror, understand that quality does not necessarily equate to the most expensive gourmet foods. Choosing good ingredients can be as simple as knowing the most suitable types of butter and cream to buy, when to use fresh versus frozen fruit, and the optimal chocolate for your recipe of choice. This section will introduce you to the most common candy ingredients and make a few purchasing recommendations when appropriate.

.... SWEETENERS

Granulated sugar: Granulated sugar is the product most people think of when they hear the word “sugar.” Also known as white sugar or table sugar, it is the most common ingredient in candy making. It is made by refining the sweet juice from sugar cane or, increasingly, beets, into fine white crystals. Sugar that is made from pure sugar cane is usually labeled “cane sugar,” but sugar that is made from beets or a combination of beet and cane sugars is often unspecified and simply called “sugar.” I am a cane sugar purist—in my experience, beet sugar does not behave predictably and can produce inconsistent, undesirable results when cooked to high temperatures. I recommend buying only sugar that is clearly labeled as coming from sugar cane.

Brown sugar: Brown sugar is actually granulated sugar that has molasses added back in after processing. Brown sugar is available in light and dark varieties; light brown sugar, which has a milder flavor, should be used to make the recipes in this book. When measuring brown sugar by volume, always pack it tightly into the measuring cup to get an accurate measurement.

Powdered sugar: Also known as confectioners’ sugar or icing sugar, powdered sugar is made from finely pulverized granulated sugar. It often contains a small amount of cornstarch to prevent clumping. Because it easily absorbs moisture from the air, it should always be stored in an airtight container and be sifted before use to remove any lumps.

Corn syrup: Corn syrup has developed a bad reputation. It is true that high-fructose corn syrup has unnecessarily weaseled its way into many packaged foods, but in my opinion corn syrup still has a place in the candy maker’s kitchen. It is an invaluable tool that prevents crystallization in sugar candies, and it improves the texture of fudges and truffles. Corn syrup comes in two varieties, light and dark corn syrup. Light corn syrup is more refined and has no discernible flavor, while dark corn syrup has an amber color and a caramel taste. The two are not interchangeable, and all of the recipes in this book call for light corn syrup.

Honey: Honey is a natural sweetener with a flavor that can range from light and fruity to intensely dark and pungent. You should use any honey whose flavor you enjoy eating plain, but be aware that the stronger varieties may overpower other ingredients in the candy. Make sure you use liquid honey, as opposed to the “creamed” variety.



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: granulated sugar, light corn syrup, powdered sugar, honey, brown sugar, molasses

Maple syrup: Maple syrup is made from the sweet sap of the maple tree. It comes in various grades, which indicate the color and strength of the syrup. Grade A is lighter and has a more delicate flavor, while Grade B is stronger and more assertive. The variety you use is entirely dependent on your personal preference. Make sure you select genuine maple syrup as opposed to imitation “pancake syrup,” which is merely a sugary syrup with maple flavoring added.

Molasses: Molasses is a thick syrup with a dark color and a strong, distinctive flavor. Varieties include light molasses, dark molasses, and blackstrap molasses. It should only be used in candies where you desire a molasses taste, because it can quickly overwhelm other flavors.

Artificial sweeteners: There are many artificial sweeteners on the market, but none of them are suitable substitutes for sugar in candy making, and they should not be used in the recipes in this book.

.... CHOCOLATES

Cocoa butter: Cocoa butter is the fat that is derived from cocoa beans. It is solid at room temperature, and is commonly sold in bar or chip form. Although “cocoa butter” sounds delicious, it usually has a neutral flavor because it has been deodorized. Because cocoa butter is the same fat that is in chocolate, it can easily be added to melted chocolate to make it more fluid. It also makes an appearance in Part III, on page 143, where it is mixed with luster dust and used to paint chocolate candies.

Unsweetened chocolate: As the name implies, unsweetened chocolate has no sugar added, so it is very bitter when tasted on its own. It is sometimes labeled “baking chocolate” because it is often used in baking recipes like brownies and cakes. In candy making, unsweetened chocolate is used to provide a strong chocolate flavor in recipes like fudge, which already contains a great deal of sugar from other sources.

Dark chocolate: Dark chocolate is a catchall term that refers to any chocolate that contains cocoa solids, cocoa butter, and sugar, but no milk solids. Depending on the cocoa percentage, dark chocolate can range anywhere from “sweet dark”



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: dark chocolate, white chocolate, milk chocolate, cocoa butter chips, cocoa powder, semi-sweet chocolate chips

varieties that contain only 30 percent cocoa products, to semisweet, bittersweet, and finally ultra-dark varieties that border on unsweetened. In this book, whenever I recommend using “dark chocolate,” I am referring to a semisweet chocolate with a cocoa percentage around 60 to 65 percent. You can adjust this recommendation, of course, depending on your personal tastes.

Because dark chocolate does not contain milk solids, and milk and white chocolates do, the three types of chocolate behave very differently and should not be interchanged when used as an ingredient in candy recipes. If the chocolate is to be used for dipping candies, however, you can take liberties and dip with whichever chocolate you prefer.

Milk chocolate: In addition to containing cocoa solids and cocoa butter, milk chocolate contains either dry milk solids or condensed milk. In the United States, milk chocolate only has to have a cocoa percentage of 10 percent to qualify as chocolate, but this is a pitifully small amount and results in a nearly flavorless candy. I recommend using a milk chocolate with at least 35 percent cocoa solids.

White chocolate: White chocolate, with its distinct lack of chocolate flavor and color, has inspired many a debate as to whether it is a true chocolate or not. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), because white chocolate contains cocoa butter, it can be admitted to the chocolate club. In order to qualify as white chocolate, products must contain at least 20 percent cocoa butter, but I recommend using white chocolates that have at least 30 percent cocoa butter, for the best taste and texture. White chocolate also contains milk solids, flavorings like vanilla, and a good amount of sugar.

Cocoa powder: Cocoa powder is an unsweetened powder with a strong chocolate flavor. It comes in two varieties: natural and Dutch-processed (sometimes called “alkalized”). Dutch processing involves treating the cocoa powder to remove sour flavors, and it also gives cocoa powder a deeper chocolate color. Because Dutch processing changes the acidity of the cocoa powder, the two varieties sometimes behave differently depending on the specific recipe. The recipes in this book were tested with Dutch-processed cocoa powder.

Chocolate chips: Chocolate chips are great in cookies, but they have no place in most candy recipes. Chips are usually made from low-quality chocolate, meaning they have a weak flavor, and they contain additives that help them hold their

shape at higher temperatures. Chocolate chips are extremely thick when melted, and they cannot be used for tempering or coating dipped candies. The one exception to my no-chips-allowed policy is when they are used in recipes to add texture, as in the recipe for Mint Chocolate Chip Truffles on page 93.

Chocolate candy coating: Chocolate candy coating is actually a chocolate substitute, used to replace tempered chocolate in dipped confections. You can learn more about candy coating in the How to Temper Chocolate section on page 26.

... DAIRY PRODUCTS ...

Cream: Cream and milk are both categorized by the amount of butterfat they contain. Cream varieties include heavy cream, light cream, whipping cream, and manufacturing cream. For the recipes in this book, you should always use heavy cream, which is defined as having between 36 and 40 percent butterfat.

Milk: The recipes in this book were developed using whole milk, which contains at least 3.5 percent fat. Whenever possible, select pasteurized milk and cream rather than ultra-pasteurized, which has been heated to an extremely high temperature and lacks a fresh dairy flavor.

Butter: Butter is available in salted and unsalted varieties, but I recommend using only unsalted butter. Salt acts as a preservative, meaning that salted butter can sit on store shelves longer and end up tasting less fresh than unsalted butter. Additionally, there are no regulations regarding how much salt is in salted butter, so using unsalted butter gives you a greater degree of control over how much salt your candy actually contains.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: butter, heavy cream, sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk.

Please, don't even think about using margarine in place of butter. It has a higher water content than butter, which can affect the behavior and texture of your candy, and more importantly, the taste is far inferior.

Evaporated milk: Evaporated milk is a canned dairy product. As the name suggests, it is made by evaporating much of the water from milk. The advantage of using evaporated milk is that it is shelf-stable, so it is easy to keep a supply on hand in the pantry. Because it has a lower water content, it requires less cooking time when used in candy recipes, making it a convenient ingredient in fudges and caramels.

Sweetened condensed milk: Sweetened condensed milk is made by evaporating most of the water from milk and replacing it with a large quantity of sugar. The sugar acts as a preservative, so this canned milk product can be stored even longer than evaporated milk. Sweetened condensed milk is commonly used for making dulce de leche, caramels, and fudges, especially quick microwave fudge recipes.

.... NUTS

I'm nuts for nuts, so you will find a wide variety of nut candies in this book. There are the usual suspects—peanuts, almonds, cashews, and pecans—but I've also included less common nuts like Brazil nuts, pistachios, and hazelnuts. Nuts are generally a flexible ingredient, and if you don't want to use a certain type of nut, you can usually swap it out for a different variety.

With a few exceptions, I recommend buying raw nuts and toasting them yourself. The toasting process deepens the flavor of the nuts and allows you to control how dark they get, and thus how flavorful. Even when I buy nuts already toasted, I often pop them in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes to enhance their taste, because store-bought toasted nuts are never as flavorful as those fresh from the kitchen oven. My exceptions to this rule are entirely a matter of personal preference; I usually do not go to the trouble of toasting and salting my own peanuts and macadamia nuts.

Nuts contain a great deal of natural oil, which makes them delicious—and prone to spoiling. To preserve the shelf life of your nuts, keep them well sealed in the freezer, the refrigerator, or a cool, dark place. This will prevent their oils from going bad and prevent you from unwittingly making candies with rancid ingredients! (I speak from tragic experience here.) Nuts can be kept for up to a year in the freezer with no ill effects. Be sure to bring them to room temperature before using them in candy recipes.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: peanuts, hazelnuts, pecans, cashews, almonds, walnuts





.... FRUITS

Fresh fruit can be expensive, so finding the balance between cost and quality is a priority in choosing fruit for candy making. One way to save money is to use frozen fruit where appropriate. For recipes that don't depend on fresh fruit in its natural state but instead rely on a fruit purée, like the Strawberry-Mint Pâte de Fruits on page 134, less expensive frozen fruit can easily be substituted for fresh. The flavor will probably be less vibrant, but the overall taste and texture of the candy will survive. In recipes where the fruit is used whole, as in Glazed Fruit on page 130, defrosted frozen fruit is not a good substitute.

When it comes to selecting fresh fruit, the big question is, should you buy organic or conventionally grown produce? Buying exclusively organic fruit is the healthiest option, but a

tight grocery budget might make this goal unrealistic. If you need to perform organic triage, I suggest prioritizing the "Dirty Dozen," a list of the twelve most contaminated foods, as ranked by the Environmental Working Group. Fruits with the highest amount of pesticides include peaches, apples, nectarines, strawberries, grapes, cherries, and pears. I recommend buying organic versions of these fruits whenever possible.

Additionally, citrus fruits are often categorized as safe to buy conventionally because they have a thick rind that protects the fruit from pesticides, but if you are using these fruits to make Candied Citrus Peel on page 132, I recommend purchasing organic fruit so the peel is not contaminated.

.... FLAVORING OILS AND EXTRACTS

Extracts and oils can add a wonderful punch of flavor to any candy. The most common extract is vanilla, but fruit flavors, mint, and almond are also readily available on any supermarket shelf. Extracts are usually labeled as either natural or imitation. Whenever possible, select all-natural extracts, which have a purer, less chemical taste. When looking to add vanilla flavor, your options are not limited to extract. Vanilla bean paste and the scraped seeds of vanilla beans are both excellent substitutes, and provide a stronger, fresher flavor than vanilla extracts.

Unlike alcohol-based extracts, flavoring oils have the advantage of being able to be mixed directly into melted chocolate without causing it to seize. Additionally, flavoring oils are usually much more potent than extracts, so you can add less and still get a strong, pure flavor. Both oils and extracts should be added to candies at the end of the cooking process, so that the flavoring does not evaporate or boil off.

.... SALT

Salt enhances the flavor and balances the sweetness of all types of candy. I recommend using kosher salt rather than iodized table salt. Kosher salt has larger grains and less sodium than table salt, and it has less of a harsh chemical flavor. Several recipes in this book call for flaked sea salt to be used as a crunchy garnish. Although these gourmet salts with large, coarse crystals are wonderful for embellishing candies, they should not be used in place of salt in the recipes themselves.

* Equipment *



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: A. small paintbrushes, B. parchment paper, C. chocolate thermometer, D. candy thermometer, E. offset spatulas, F. pastry brush, G. kitchen scale, H. bench scraper

Most candies do not require specialty equipment, and if you cook or bake regularly you probably have most of what you need for candy making already in your kitchen. In addition to a few common appliances like a stove, a microwave, and a mixer, here are some tools and accessories that are of particular use in candy making.

Paintbrushes: Small paintbrushes can be used to brush a thin layer of chocolate inside of candy molds or candy cups. They are also useful for decorating finished candies with luster dust, gold leaf, or other specialty embellishments. Make sure the brushes you use are clean and have only been used for food handling.

Parchment paper: Parchment paper has many uses, including forming paper cones for decorating, covering work surfaces and baking sheets, and providing a smooth, nonstick surface for dipped candies.

Chocolate thermometer: To temper chocolate, you will need a digital or glass thermometer that can display temperatures in one-digit increments between the range of 80° and 120°F (26.5° and 50°C).

Candy thermometer: Candy thermometers are often labeled “candy/deep-fry thermometers” and have a temperature span from 100° to 400°F (38° to 204°C). They can range from an inexpensive glass tube to a complex digital thermometer, but make sure whichever thermometer you choose has a clip that allows you to attach it to the side of your saucepan. This leaves your hands free and keeps the bulb from touching the bottom of the pan.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: A. candy scoop, B. pastry bag and tip, C. dipping tools, D. candy coloring and flavoring, E. chocolate and hard candy molds, F. candy cups, G. candy sticks

Offset spatulas: These metal spatulas with angled blades are my tools of choice for smoothing toffee, fudge, and marshmallows into even layers on baking sheets and in pans. The larger sizes are useful for filling pastry bags and scraping the tops of candy molds, and the smaller sizes are good for finer decorating work.

Pastry brushes: Pastry brushes are used to wipe down the sides of the saucepan when cooking sugar candies. Make sure you have a pastry brush that is dedicated for candy work only, so that it does not absorb odors from savory cooking.

Kitchen scale: Measuring out your candy ingredients using a kitchen scale is the fastest, most reliable, and most accurate method of measuring. Look for a scale that can display weights in both imperial and metric measurements for the most versatility.

Bench scrapers: Bench scrapers can be used to scrape ingredients, clean work surfaces, agitate candies like fondant and fudge, and cut blocks of candy.

Candy scoop: A candy scoop is useful when portioning out truffles and other round candies. Scoops are available in a variety of diameters and make the task of creating consistently sized balls of candy fast and efficient.

Pastry bags and tips: In candy making, pastry bags are most often used for filling chocolate molds with soft fillings. They can also be used to add decorative touches to candy or for piping candies into special shapes.

Dipping tools: While you can easily use a dinner fork for dipping truffles, to get the cleanest results you will want to use dipping tools. They are often sold as a set, with a round or spiral dipper and a forklike dipper with two or three tines. Round dippers are useful for dipping round candies, while fork dippers are good for dipping square truffles, caramels, and other candies with flat bases.

Food coloring and candy coloring: In candy making you will use both food coloring and candy coloring. Candy coloring is oil-based, so it mixes well with white chocolate and candy coating. If you try to color chocolate with regular food coloring, which is water-based, the color will appear streaky and the water content might cause the chocolate to seize.

Food coloring can be used for all other types of candy, including hard candies, marshmallows, and ganaches. It comes in liquid, gel, and powdered varieties. I prefer gel coloring, which is more concentrated than the liquid variety and more consistent than the powdered variety. Gel coloring provides strong, deep color while adding a minimal amount of excess moisture, which can skew a candy recipe.

Candy molds: There are two main types of candy molds: molds that are intended for chocolate and other low-temperature candies, and molds that are intended for hard candies and other high-temperature uses. Trying to use a chocolate mold to make hard candy can result in a melted mold and a huge mess, so it is important to understand the type of mold you are purchasing and its intended use. Chocolate molds can be either thick polycarbonate or thinner, clear plastic, while hard candy molds can be metal or thick, opaque plastic. See page 31 for additional information about chocolate molds.

Candy cups: Candy cups are both an attractive and a practical way to present candy. In addition to making your candies look professional, these miniature foil or paper cups separate them individually, which prevents them from sticking together or becoming scuffed. Candy cups can also be used to mold chocolate cups, as in the recipe for Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups on page 107.

Candy sticks: Candy sticks are used to make lollipops. They come in different lengths and widths, so if you are using lollipop molds, be sure to buy the size that corresponds with the openings in your molds.

Candy-Making Techniques



I hope you're ready for candy boot camp, because this chapter is all about mastering fundamental candy techniques. In the following pages, you will learn necessary skills—how to cook sugar, how to temper chocolate, how to mold candy, and how to prepare nuts for cooking. Please read this section carefully, because most success in the kitchen depends on understanding how to properly work with sugar and chocolate.

* General Candy-Making Tips *

Unfortunately for the sugar fiends among us, candy making can be a time-consuming process. Depending on the recipe, cooking sugar can take anywhere from 15 to 50 minutes, not counting any other recipe preparation steps. The long process can be annoying, but it should not be rushed. To get the best flavor from caramelizing sugar it should be cooked between medium and medium-high heat (the recipe will specify). Do not try to speed the process by turning the heat to the highest setting. This will most likely scorch your candy, leaving you with a sad, burnt-tasting product and a ruined pan.

When selecting a pan for cooking candy, choose pans with a heavy bottom that will distribute heat evenly, and always follow the recipe's recommendations for pan size. Many candies can boil to three or four times their initial size during the cooking process, which can cause messy and frustrating accidents if your pan is too small. If a recipe does not specify an exact quart size, assume that a small pan holds about 1 quart (1 L), a medium pan holds 3 to 4 quarts (2.7 to 3.6 L), and a large pan holds at least 6 quarts (5.4 L).

As a general rule, I do not recommend doubling the recipes in this book. Increasing the recipe quantities sometimes works just fine, but sometimes the extra volume prevents the candy from cooking properly and gives unsatisfactory results.

The measurements in this book are given in both weight and volume. Although it is possible to successfully cook candy using volume measurements, I highly recommend investing in a kitchen scale. Scales can be purchased inexpensively, and they will give you more accurate, consistent results in your cooking. You will also find that recipe preparation goes faster when everything is weighed out, eliminating the need for fumbling with cups and spoons. In addition, there is no reliable way to measure the volume of chopped chocolate, because the weight of 1 cup of chocolate can vary so drastically depending on the type of chocolate and the size of the pieces. As a result, the chocolate measurements in this book are given solely by weight.



Melted sugar can easily crystallize if not handled properly.

* Working with Sugar *

Working with sugar is not exactly rocket science, but you'll have the best results if you understand just a bit of chemistry. Sugar naturally forms a crystalline state, and the process of cooking sugar involves manipulating these crystals to get a specific outcome and texture in the final candy. For most of the sugar-based candies in this book, granulated sugar is first combined with a liquid to form a sugar syrup.

When making the sugar syrup, you should stir constantly with a plastic spatula, over medium heat, until all of the sugar crystals are completely dissolved. If sugar crystals remain in the syrup, they will encourage other crystals to form, causing your final candy to have a grainy, gritty texture.

If you're using a candy thermometer, don't insert it into the syrup until all of the sugar is dissolved, and the syrup is boiling. This prevents undissolved sugar crystals from clinging to the thermometer and recrystallizing the syrup. Clip the thermometer securely to the side of the pan. To avoid a false reading, make sure the bulb is completely submerged in the syrup and not touching the bottom of the pan.

Sometimes sugar crystals stick to the sides of the pan, so many of the recipes will instruct you to either brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to remove any stray crystals or to cover the pan of boiling syrup with a lid, so that the condensation can wash down the sides of the pan and dissolve the crystals.

Finally, there is one more safeguard against crystallization: interfering agents. Don't be dissuaded by the scary name—these substances are actually a huge help to the candy maker. Interfering agents are added to a sugar syrup during cooking to prevent the formation of sugar crystals. The most common agents are acids like lemon juice, vinegar, and cream of tartar, or corn syrup. Adding any of these to your sugar syrup will make the chance of unintentional crystallization less likely, and will allow you to stir the syrup periodically without fear of accidentally introducing sugar crystals into the mixture.

Sugar crystals are not always bad; some candies, like fudge and fondant, depend on the formation of sugar crystals to achieve their characteristic texture. Other candies, however, require a smooth, glasslike finish without a hint of graininess, so take care in your handling of the sugar syrup and follow the instructions on when to stir and when to avoid agitating the boiling sugar.



Testing a thermometer
in boiling water

.... CALIBRATING YOUR CANDY THERMOMETER

Forget fancy copper saucepans, expensive appliances, or gourmet ingredients—an accurate candy thermometer is the most important tool in the candy maker’s kitchen. A difference of even a few small degrees in cooking temperature can have a huge impact, so for the best results, make it a regular practice to test the accuracy of your candy thermometer. If you live at a high altitude, testing your thermometer is even more important, because the boiling point of water changes and this can affect sugar cooking temperatures. To test your thermometer, follow these steps:

1. Bring a pot of water to a rolling boil. At sea level, the boiling point of water is 212°F (100°C).
2. Insert your candy thermometer and clip it to the side of the pan. Make sure the bulb is fully submerged in the water but not touching the bottom of the pan. Keep the thermometer in the boiling water for several minutes to ensure an accurate reading.
3. After 2 or 3 minutes, check the temperature. If it reads 212°F (100°C), you know your thermometer is completely accurate! Chances are, however, it might be off by a few degrees, or more, in either direction. Take this temperature difference into account every time you use the thermometer.

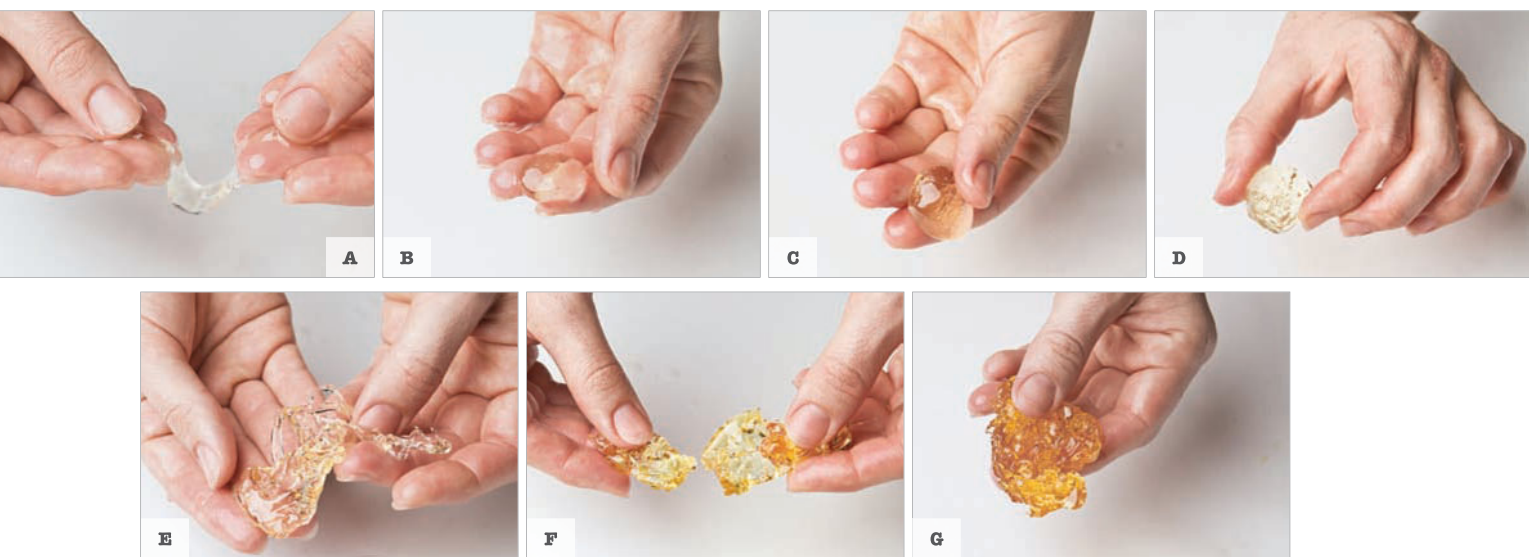
For instance, if your thermometer reads 205°F (96°C) in the boiling water, you know that it displays temperatures 7°F (4°C) cooler than they actually are. If a recipe calls for the candy to be cooked to 240°F (115.5°C), you will only need to cook it until your thermometer reads 233°F (111.5°C). If you wait until your thermometer reads 240°F (115.5°C), the candy will actually be quite overcooked! Make a note of the temperature difference so that you can remember your personal “candy thermometer conversion.”

Candy thermometers can become less accurate over time, so you should make it a habit to perform this test on a regular basis.

.... DETERMINING SUGAR TEMPERATURE WITH THE COLD WATER TEST

Before there were candy thermometers, there was the cold water test to determine the temperature of boiling sugar. Thermometers are now the preferred method for judging candy temperatures accurately, but the cold water method still has its supporters—in fact, I prefer it for testing the finished texture of caramels (see page 59). Here's how to test your candy's temperature without a thermometer:

1. Before you start cooking, place a teaspoon and a small bowl of cold water with a few ice cubes next to the stove.
2. Once the sugar syrup is boiling, drop small spoonfuls of it into the ice-cold water.
3. Let it sit for a few seconds, then dip your fingers in, carefully remove the sugar, and check the consistency. The texture of the sugar signals the current temperature of the candy.



A. Thread stage: The sugar does not hold its shape, but forms thin threads between the fingers (230° to 235°F [110° to 112.8°C]).

B. Soft ball stage: The sugar can be formed into a ball, but it starts to soften and flatten after a few seconds (235° to 240°F [112.8° to 115.6°C]).

C. Firm ball stage: The sugar forms a solid ball that can still be compressed between the fingers (245° to 250°F [118.3° to 121°C]).

D. Hard ball stage: The sugar forms a ball that cannot be easily flattened (250° to 265°F [121° to 129.5°C]).

E. Soft crack stage: The sugar can be stretched between the fingers to form a piece that will bend slightly before breaking apart (270° to 290°F [132° to 143.3°C]).

F. Hard crack stage: The sugar immediately forms brittle threads when it is immersed in the ice water and easily breaks into hard pieces (300° to 310°F [149° to 154.5°C]).

G. Caramel stage: The sugar is fragrant, has an amber color, and is extremely hard and brittle when immersed in water (320° to 350°F [160° to 176.7°C]).

* Working with Chocolate *

The days of the home baker being forced to settle for one or two substandard types of chocolate from the grocery store are long gone. Today there are many excellent brands of fine chocolate readily available to the home consumer, including Valrhona, El Rey, Cacao Barry, Guittard, Lindt, and Callebaut. It's exciting to have so many options, but how do you choose between them?

When selecting chocolate to use in these recipes, let your taste buds be your guide. I have provided several brand recommendations, but don't let those limit you—be adventurous and conduct your own taste test! Choose a chocolate with a flavor and texture you enjoy eating plain. As long as you are following the recipe guidelines and using the recommended dark, milk, or white variety, there is no wrong choice. And if you don't initially find a chocolate to your liking, then taste, taste again.

To store your chocolate, keep it well wrapped in a cool, dry environment, away from strong odors. Chocolate should not be stored in a refrigerator or freezer if possible, because it might absorb condensation that will cause problems when it is later melted or tempered. If your environment is so warm that room temperature is not an option, wrap the chocolate very well in plastic wrap, place it in an airtight container, and store it in the refrigerator. When you remove it from the refrigerator, do not unwrap it until it has come to room temperature. Dark chocolate will keep for over a year, while milk and white chocolate are good for at least six months.



A. Chopping chocolate with a chef's knife
B. Chopping chocolate with a serrated knife

... HOW TO CHOP CHOCOLATE ...

If you buy your chocolate in bar form, it should be chopped into small pieces before being melted or tempered. Chocolate is sensitive to overheating, and chopping the chocolate ensures that it melts quickly and evenly, without becoming scorched. Chocolate wafers (known as pistoles) are generally thin enough that they do not need to be chopped.

To chop chocolate you should use either a large chef's knife or a serrated knife with a long blade. To use a chef's knife, begin at one corner of the chocolate bar and angle the blade out at a slight diagonal. Use firm pressure to chop small pieces off the bar, working your way inward. Periodically rotate the bar and begin at a new corner until the chocolate is chopped into small, even pieces (**A**).

A serrated knife requires less force than a chef's knife and works well for thinner bars of chocolate. Again beginning at one corner, use a gentle sawing motion to chop off shards of chocolate. Rotate the bar and work your way in from the corners until all of the chocolate is in small pieces that are approximately the same size (B).

.... HOW TO MELT CHOCOLATE

Melting chocolate seems like a no-brainer, but there are two trouble areas to watch out for in this seemingly simple process: heat and water. If chocolate is overheated, it will become thick, unworkable, and eventually scorched. Water is equally dangerous—even a few drops of water in a bowl of melting chocolate can cause it to “seize,” or thicken into a grainy, unappetizing glob. Fortunately, if you are careful, it's easy to avoid these pitfalls.

It is traditional to melt chocolate with a double boiler, but I prefer to use a microwave. It is faster and easier and does not involve boiling water, which always poses a risk of steam or stray water droplets contaminating the chocolate. To melt chocolate in the microwave, place chopped chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl. Melt the chocolate in 30-second intervals, stirring with a rubber spatula after every 30 seconds so that it does not overheat. Stop heating the chocolate when there are still a few chunks remaining, because the residual heat will melt the last bits of chocolate.

If you prefer to use the stovetop, bring 1 inch (2.5 cm) of water to a simmer in the bottom pan of a double boiler. Place the chopped chocolate in the top portion of the double boiler, and set it over the simmering water. Turn the heat off and let the gradual heat of the water melt the chocolate. Stir frequently, and monitor the double boiler to make sure it's not steaming or splattering water into the chocolate. When the chocolate is melted, remove the top of the double boiler and carefully wipe the bottom to remove any condensation.

.... HOW TO TEMPER CHOCOLATE

Tempering chocolate is a fundamental skill for the home candy maker, and a necessary step in making many of the chocolate recipes in this book. It has a bad reputation as a difficult, intimidating process, suitable only for professionals, but that couldn't be further from the truth! It is true that tempering, like many culinary skills, does take some practice, but in this section I hope to demystify the process and show how simple tempering can be.

What Is Tempering?

Tempering is the process of heating and cooling melted chocolate to produce gorgeously shiny, professional-looking candies. Simply melting chocolate is not enough to get a flawless chocolate finish, due to the unique chemical makeup of chocolate.

All chocolate contains cocoa butter, a complex fat that has the ability to form different crystalline structures. If chocolate is simply melted without regard to the heating and cooling temperatures, the fat crystals will arrange themselves in a loose, haphazard structure upon cooling. Tempering controls the cooling of the fat crystals and arranges them to form tight, stable bonds.

The question you might now ask is, “So what? Why should I care about the crystalline bonds of my chocolate, as long as it tastes good?” Unfortunately for the science-averse, tempered chocolate has a very different behavior, texture, and even taste when compared to untempered chocolate.

Chocolate that has been tempered is smooth and shiny, with a glossy finish and a slight “snap” when you break it. It sets quickly at cool room temperature, and releases from chocolate molds cleanly and easily. Tempered chocolate has a higher melting point than untempered chocolate, meaning that it does not get soft and sticky at room temperature, is less prone to melting in your hand, and has a pleasant, slow-melting quality in the mouth.

Chocolate that has been melted but not tempered often has a dull, matte look when it sets, and might have white or grayish streaks or spots. This is called “bloom,” and it is the result of cocoa butter crystals coming to the surface of the chocolate. Bloom is not harmful, and bloomed chocolate is still completely edible, but the texture is often rough and crumbly, with a muted chocolate flavor. In addition, untempered chocolate is quick to melt at room temperature and become soft when handled, so there are practical as well as aesthetic reasons for using tempered chocolate.

When Should I Temper Chocolate?

Chocolate should be tempered when it is necessary to give your candies a firm texture or a hard, shiny coating. The most common uses for tempered chocolate include dipping truffles and other candies, making molded chocolates, and forming barks and clusters.

There are a few instances when you do not need to worry about tempering chocolate. When chocolate is used as a flavoring ingredient in candy recipes—for instance, when it is melted into fudge, kneaded into fondant, or incorporated into ganache—it does not need to be tempered. The recipes in this book will always indicate when your chocolate should be tempered.

How Do I Temper Chocolate?

There are many different methods for tempering chocolate, and there is not one definitive “best” way to temper. The process described here, known as the “Seed Method,” is the technique I use most frequently, and I think it is the most accessible for beginners. The appeal of this method is that it uses a piece of solid, tempered chocolate to plant “seeds” of good cocoa butter crystals in melted chocolate, greatly accelerating the tempering process.

Before You Begin

Tempering chocolate requires a chocolate thermometer, not to be confused with a candy thermometer. (See page 17 for pictures and descriptions of both thermometers.) A digital thermometer can be used instead, but only if it can provide accurate one-degree readings of temperatures from 80° to 120°F (26.5° to 50°C).

Chocolate tempering works best in a cool, dry environment. It is not impossible to temper chocolate during hot or humid weather, but it is much less predictable. To prevent frustration, try to avoid tempering chocolate on stormy, foggy, or extremely hot days.

Be sure to use real, tempered chocolate. Chocolate chips contain additives that help them keep their shape during baking, and these additives make tempering impossible. Additionally, the chocolate you are using must already be in temper. Examine it carefully to make sure it is hard and shiny, without streaks or spots that indicate bloom. Chocolate is always tempered before it is sold, but if it has been stored or transported in hot weather, it’s possible that it has come out of temper. The Seed Method will not work if you use bloomed chocolate.



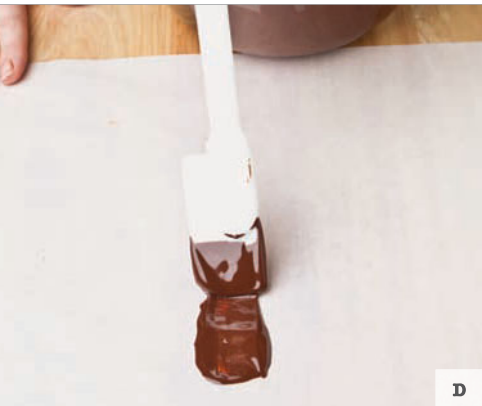
A



B



C



D



E



F

- A.** Chop three-quarters of the chocolate, and leave one-quarter whole.
- B.** Melt the chopped chocolate, then add the chocolate chunk.
- C.** Stir the chunk into the chocolate, letting it melt and release good seed crystals. Monitor the temperature carefully.
- D.** Once the chocolate has cooled to the prescribed temperature, spread some chocolate on a piece of parchment at room temperature to see whether it sets properly.
- E.** When the chocolate is tempered, remove the chunk of chocolate.
- F.** Tempered chocolate on the left, mildly bloomed chocolate in the middle, very bloomed chocolate on the right

I recommend beginning with at least 24 ounces (672 g) of chocolate. This may be more than you need for your recipe, but it is difficult to temper small amounts of chocolate, and a large bowl of chocolate will stay in temper longer than a smaller bowl. Any extra chocolate can be saved and remelted for later use, or use it to make some of the barks and clusters in chapter 9 (page 100).

The Tempering Process

Begin by chopping approximately three-quarters of the chocolate into small pieces, as described on page 25. Leave one-quarter of the chocolate unchopped, in one or two large chunks. Place the chopped chocolate in a large microwave-safe bowl, and reserve the chocolate chunk to the side (A).

Microwave the chocolate bowl in 30-second intervals on high heat. Stir the chocolate well with a rubber spatula after every 30 seconds. Periodically insert the chocolate thermometer and take the temperature of the melting chocolate. Heat dark chocolate until it registers 115°F (46°C), and heat white or milk chocolate to 110°F (43.3°C). Do not bring dark chocolate over 120°F (49°C) and milk or white chocolate over 115°F (46°C).

Once your bowl of chocolate is warm enough, add the reserved chunk of chocolate **(B)**. Because the chunk of chocolate is already in temper, as it melts it gradually releases “seeds” of stable cocoa butter crystals that mix with the melted chocolate and encourage it to form a tight, crystalline structure as the chocolate cools. Stir the chocolate frequently—stirring helps the chocolate cool faster, and agitation also aids the tempering process. Be sure to scrape down the bottom and sides of the bowl as you stir.

As you stir the cooling chocolate, you will notice a change in its appearance and texture. When it is warm it is fluid and very shiny, but as it cools and comes into temper, it gets thicker, with more of a glossy, satiny finish. Stir the chocolate until it has cooled to under 90°F (32°C) for dark chocolate, or 87°F (30.6°C) for milk and white chocolate **(C)**.

At this point, smear a spoonful of chocolate onto a piece of parchment paper to test whether it is tempered. If it is in temper, the chocolate will start to set within several minutes, becoming hard and glossy. If you are in a cool room, dark chocolate should set within 4 to 5 minutes, and milk or white chocolate should set within 7 to 8 minutes. Resist the temptation to refrigerate the chocolate and speed the process—this will skew the test results **(D)**.

If the chocolate sets with a firm, shiny finish, congratulations! You have successfully tempered chocolate. Remove the chocolate chunk from the melted chocolate and set it aside. (If it stays in the chocolate, it will continue to lower the temperature of the bowl and your chocolate will quickly become too thick. The chocolate chunk can be saved and reused later.) Your chocolate can now be used in any recipe that calls for tempered chocolate **(E)**.

If the test strip of chocolate does not set, continue to stir the bowl of chocolate and let the temperature drop a few more degrees, then test it again. Different brands of chocolate behave differently, and some require a slightly higher or lower temperature before they come into temper.

Keeping Chocolate in Temper

Tempering chocolate is only half of the battle—once it is tempered, it needs to be maintained at a working temperature. For dark chocolate this means 86° to 89°F (30° to 31.7°C), and for milk and white chocolate this means 84° to 87°F (29° to 30.6°C). There are several different ways of keeping chocolate in temper. Some cooks like to set the bowl of chocolate on top of a barely warm heating pad wrapped in a towel. Some periodically pass the bowl over a gas burner to warm the bottom. Some microwave the chocolate in short bursts on half power, and some even blast the sides of the bowl with a hair dryer!

Whichever method you choose, make sure the reheated chocolate does not exceed 95°F (35°C) for dark chocolate, or 90°F (32.2°C) for milk or white chocolate. If the chocolate gets above these temperatures, it will go out of temper, and you will need to begin the heating and seeding process again.

And Remember...

Although there is a fair amount of science behind the tempering of chocolate, it is also an art, and success requires practice. The good news is that unless it has scorched or seized, chocolate is forgiving. If you make mistakes and do not temper it correctly, you can simply remelt it and start again. This is all part of the delicious process of chocolate experimentation!



Chocolate candy coating on the left, chopped chocolate on the right

HOW CAN I AVOID TEMPERING CHOCOLATE?

Short of hiring a private pastry chef to do all of your chocolate work, you have only two options when it comes to avoiding tempering: keeping your untempered chocolates refrigerated, or using chocolate candy coating. If you decide not to temper, your chocolate candies will need to be stored in, and served directly from, the refrigerator to prevent blooming. This can be a workable solution, but the flavor and texture of your candies might suffer if they are served chilled, and the chocolates will most likely bloom if they are left out at room temperature for an extended period of time.

Candy coating, also known as summer coating or compound coating, is a confectionary product that can be used to replace tempered chocolate for dipping. It should never be used to replace chocolate when it is an ingredient in other recipes, like truffles or fudge. Candy coating is generally sold in wafer form and is available in many different varieties, including dark chocolate, light chocolate, and a rainbow of non-chocolate colors and flavors. The chocolate varieties often contain some amount of cocoa, but they are not true chocolates because they contain other fats, such as palm kernel oil, instead of cocoa butter.

The advantage of candy coating is that it can be melted and used immediately, no tempering required. It's extremely user-friendly, and unlike untempered chocolate, it sets firm and shiny at room temperature. The disadvantage is that the texture and flavor are vastly inferior to those of true chocolate. Candy coating can be a convenient shortcut, especially when time is of the essence or you are dipping only a small number of items, but remember that what you gain in convenience you sacrifice in flavor.

.... HOW TO USE CHOCOLATE MOLDS

Chocolate molds can be used to form intricately shaped chocolates that are impossible to create by hand. Inexpensive molds are made of thin plastic and are widely available at many craft stores. They work well but are more prone to breaking or cracking after periods of heavy use. Professional-grade molds are

more expensive but will last longer. They are usually made of heavy polycarbonate and can be found at specialty candy and kitchen supply stores, as well as through online retailers. (See the Resources section on page 154.)

Although chocolate molds can be used to create solid chocolate candies, they are more often used to make chocolates with soft centers, such as buttercream, nut paste, caramel, or ganache. When selecting a mold for filled chocolates, keep in mind that the cavities need to be deep enough to contain the outer chocolate shell as well as a generous amount of filling. Shallow molds are best saved for solid chocolate candies.

The most important rule of using chocolate molds is that you should always use tempered chocolate. Tempered chocolate contracts upon cooling, so it releases easily from chocolate molds. Using chocolate that is melted but not tempered is a recipe for frustration, because the chocolate might not release cleanly or have a finished shine.

To make molded chocolates, spoon tempered chocolate into the cavities of a chocolate mold. Tap the mold gently against the countertop to remove any air bubbles from the chocolate **(A)**. Let the chocolate sit at room temperature for several minutes, so that the chocolate thickens and just starts to set around the edges. Then, turn the mold upside down over the chocolate bowl or a piece of parchment paper and let the excess chocolate drip out of the mold **(B)**. Use a large chef's knife, a bench scraper, or the side of an offset spatula to scrape the top of the mold clean and remove any excess chocolate. This step will help produce clean edges on your molded chocolates **(C)**. See images on page 32.

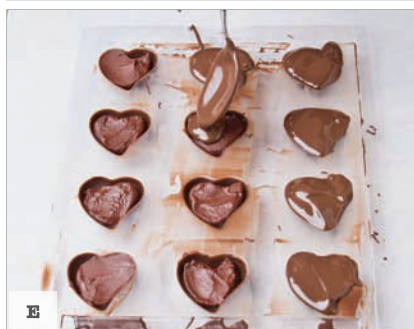
Let the chocolate set completely in the molds before filling the cavities. Pipe or spoon the filling into the cavities, making sure you leave room at the top for another layer of chocolate. In some cases, like with caramels, it is easiest to fill the molds if the filling is fluid and slightly warm. Make sure the temperature of the filling does not exceed 80°F (26.5°C)—any warmer and you risk taking the chocolate out of temper **(D)**.

Refrigerate the mold to set the filling, if it is fluid. Once set, spoon additional tempered chocolate on top of the filling **(E)**. Scrape across the top of the mold again to remove excess chocolate from the top of the candies **(F)**. Let the chocolate set completely at room temperature, for about 20 minutes. Once set, refrigerate the molds for an additional 20 minutes—this will cause the chocolate to constrict and make it easy to remove the candies.

When you are ready to unmold your chocolates, gently bend the mold to loosen the chocolates. Invert the mold over a sheet of parchment and flex it so that the chocolates drop out of the cavities **(G)**.



Molded chocolates decorated with disco dust



- A.** Spoon tempered chocolate into the cavities.
- B.** Once the chocolate starts to set, invert the mold and let excess chocolate drip out.
- C.** Scrape excess chocolate from the top of the mold.
- D.** Pipe or spoon the filling into the cavities, leaving space at the top to seal them with chocolate.
- E.** Cover each cavity with tempered chocolate.
- F.** Scrape the top of the mold again to level the backs of the candies and remove excess chocolate.
- G.** Once completely set, gently flex the mold to loosen the chocolates, then invert the mold to release them.

HOW TO CARE FOR CHOCOLATE MOLDS

If you take care of your chocolate molds, they'll take care of you, by providing you with years of gorgeously shiny, perfectly formed chocolates. To ensure the best performance, handle them carefully and do not let anything rough or abrasive scratch the inside of the cavities. When cleaning them, use warm soapy water and a gentle sponge or washcloth. Dry them thoroughly, and once they are dry, wipe the inside of the cavities with a soft cloth to remove any water spots or soap residue, as these might tarnish the appearance of the finished chocolate.

* Working with Nuts *

Nuts are a natural addition to many confections. They have a slightly sweet, slightly savory flavor and a pleasing crunch that makes them the perfect match for chocolate and sugar candies. Despite their charms, they can still be lackluster if improperly prepared—there are few things more disappointing than soft, pale, flavorless nuts! In this section you will learn how to toast, skin, and chop your nuts to get the best flavor and texture in your candy recipes.



BEFORE TOASTING

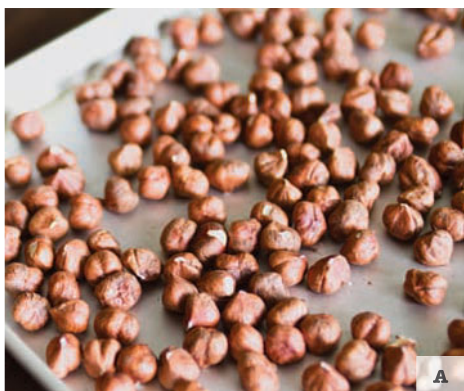


AFTER TOASTING

.... HOW TO TOAST NUTS

When it comes to toasting nuts, slow and steady wins the race. You will get better, more consistent results if you toast them at a lower temperature for a longer period of time than if you try to rush things by cranking up the oven. Unless a specific recipe notes otherwise, begin by preheating the oven to 325°F (162°C, or gas mark 3). Spread the nuts in a single layer on a baking sheet. I recommend using a shiny aluminum sheet as opposed to a double-insulated or dark black baking sheet, because the aluminum sheet will transmit heat evenly without burning the bottom of the nuts.

Bake the nuts for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the size and number of nuts. Stir them with a spatula every 3 to 4 minutes to prevent those around the edges from burning. Your nuts are done when their color has deepened on both sides and they are noticeably fragrant. Let them cool at room temperature and then check the texture to make sure they are as toasted and crisp as you want them. If not, return them to the oven for a few more minutes.



.... HOW TO SKIN NUTS

Some nuts, like hazelnuts and almonds, are often sold with their thin, papery skins still on the nuts. Although these skins are not harmful, many people find the texture distracting and the taste bitter, so it is best to remove them before cooking with them.

To skin hazelnuts, toast them on a baking sheet for about 10 minutes at 325°F (162°C, or gas mark 3) **(A)**. The hazelnuts are ready when they are fragrant and brown and their outer skins have split apart **(B)**. Remove the nuts from the oven and let them cool for a few minutes. When they are warm but no longer hot, take a rough kitchen towel in your hands and place a handful of hazelnuts in the middle **(C)**. Close up the top of the towel and vigorously rub the hazelnuts between your hands, using the friction of the towel against the nuts to peel off the skin. Repeat this process until you have removed the skins from all of your hazelnuts **(D)**. Some nuts are particularly stubborn, so don't be discouraged if they're not pristine—a small amount of skin remaining on the nuts is normal.

To skin almonds, they need to be blanched instead of toasted. Bring a pot of water to a boil and drop the almonds into the boiling water **(A)**. Cook them for 1 minute, then drain the nuts and let them cool. Once the nuts are cool enough to handle, pinch them between your fingers so that the nuts slide out of the outer skin **(B)**. After they have been skinned, they can be toasted like any other nut **(C)**.

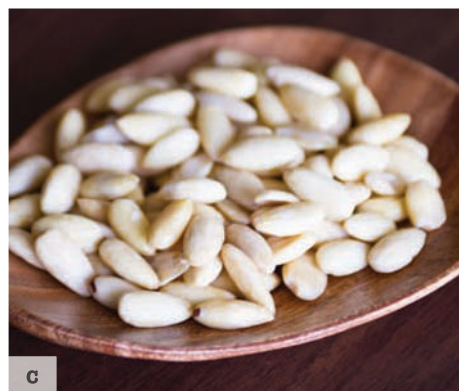
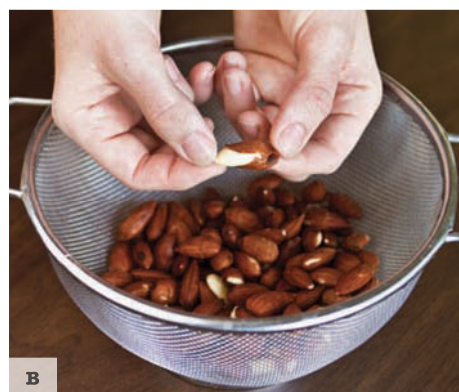
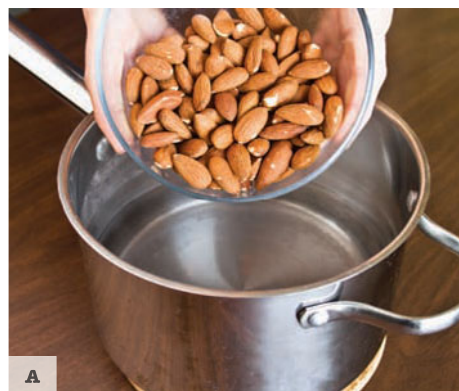
- A.** Toast hazelnuts for about 10 minutes at 325°F (162°C, or gas mark 3).
- B.** The hazelnuts are ready when their outer skins have split apart, as shown.
- C.** Put a handful of nuts in a kitchen towel and rub vigorously.
- D.** Repeat until you have removed the skin from all the nuts.

.... HOW TO CHOP NUTS

Many recipes call for nuts that are either “coarsely chopped,” “finely chopped,” or “ground.” For the first two instances I prefer to chop nuts by hand, rather than using a tool like a food processor. To chop nuts, gather them in a circle on your cutting board and use a large, sharp chef’s knife. Keep the tip of the blade down and let the heavy handle do the work. As you lift and lower the handle, rotate the knife around the circle to reach all the nuts. They will shift and roll, so periodically gather them back together into a clump. Continue chopping until the nuts are the size required for the recipe.

If the recipe calls for ground nuts, use a food processor to obtain the best results. Place the nuts in the processor and pulse it in short bursts, checking the nuts frequently. Stop mixing when the nuts are finely ground but are still individual pieces. Because of the high oil content, it’s easy to overprocess nuts and end up with oily clumps or nut butter. Similarly, never chop or grind nuts when they are warm, because the oils are more volatile and you are liable to have greasy nuts as a result.

- A.** Cook raw almonds for 1 minute in boiling water, then drain.
- B.** Once they have cooled, pinch them so the nuts slide out of the skin.
- C.** After they are skinned they are ready to be used or toasted.





Part II:

CANDY RECIPES

Chapter 3: Sugar Candies / **Chapter 4:** Fondant

Chapter 5: Caramels / **Chapter 6:** Toffee

Chapter 7: Fudge / **Chapter 8:** Truffles

Chapter 9: Chocolate Candies / **Chapter 10:** Marshmallows

Chapter 11: Fruit and Nut Candies

Sugar Candies



Sugar is the indisputable foundation of candy making. It gives flavor and body to all types of candies, and is a versatile chameleon in the kitchen. Just by mixing it with a few other ingredients and cooking it to various temperatures, you can produce soft chewy caramels, creamy fudges, or light and crispy toffees. While sugar pairs well with dairy, chocolate, fruit, nuts, and just about anything else, it's equally delicious when prepared simply, with minimal additions and adornments. This chapter celebrates sugar candy in its most basic form, and these recipes for lollipops, fruit chews, taffy, and more will make you a believer in the simple power of sugar.

* Troubleshooting Sugar Candies *

My hard candies are soft or sticky.

If your hard candies stick to your teeth, stick to one another, or are otherwise too soft, it means they have too much moisture. One likely culprit is high humidity. Humidity is the enemy of sugar work, and whenever possible, you should avoid cooking sugar candies during humid or stormy weather. Sugar is hygroscopic, meaning it absorbs water easily, and if your kitchen is too humid, the candy will absorb that excess moisture. Possible outcomes of cooking sugar in humid weather include the candy taking longer to cook, becoming unpleasantly sticky, or failing to set up altogether. Even if your weather is not humid, regular kitchen activities, like running the dishwasher or having a pot of boiling water on the stove, can greatly increase the humidity in your kitchen.

Another possible reason for sticky candies is that the hard candy was not cooked to a high enough temperature. Before making another batch of candy, calibrate your thermometer as described on page 23, and make sure you cook future batches to the temperature specified in the recipe.

Finally, hard candies will eventually become sticky even in a low-humidity environment if left unwrapped, so after the candies are formed they should be well wrapped and kept in an airtight container for long-term storage.

My hard candies taste like burned sugar.

Hard candy should be cooked to approximately 300°F (149°C), or the hard-crack stage (see page 24). At this temperature, the candies will become brittle and hard, but the sugar has not yet caramelized. If the candies are cooked to a higher temperature, the sugar will take on a darker color and flavor and, eventually, burn. If your candy has the taste of burned sugar, it has been cooked to too high a temperature. Calibrate your thermometer as described on page 23 and cook it to the proper, lower, temperature in the future.

My hard candies are gritty or grainy.

If your hard candies are coarse or gritty instead of smooth, this means that the sugar has started to crystallize. Sugar crystals might have been introduced by over-vigorous stirring, not washing down the sides of the pan properly, or stirring with a spoon that has undissolved sugar on it. The best way to prevent grainy candy is to be very conscientious about how you stir and cook sugar syrups in the future.

Lollipops

Yield: 8 large (2-inch, or 5-cm) lollipops

If you love classic lollipops, then this is the recipe for you! These lollipops can be customized with your favorite colors and flavoring extracts to make an endless variety of treats. If you don't want to use candy molds, you can make free-form lollipops by dropping spoonfuls of the cooked candy onto a silicone mat and then inserting a lollipop stick before the candy hardens.

4 ounces or ½ cup (120 ml) water

7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar

11 ounces or 1 cup (308 g) light corn syrup

1 to 2 teaspoons flavoring extract (see Note below)

3 or 4 drops gel food coloring of your choice

Prepare your hard candy lollipop molds by coating the cavities with a very light layer of nonstick cooking spray or vegetable oil. Insert lollipop sticks into the molds and set aside for now.

Combine the water, granulated sugar, and corn syrup in a 2-quart (1.8-L) saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. When the sugar syrup comes to a boil, insert a candy thermometer.

Continue to cook the sugar syrup, stirring occasionally, until the thermometer reads 300°F (149°C). Remove the pan from the heat, and let the candy stop bubbling completely. Once it is still, stir in the flavoring extract and the food coloring of your choice.

Carefully spoon the hot sugar syrup into the prepared molds, making sure that the tops of the sticks are covered with syrup and are well embedded in the candy. Let the lollipops sit and harden at room temperature until they are completely cool and firm. Once cool, don't pull them out by the sticks. Instead, carefully flex the back of the molds to remove the lollipops without causing any breakage.

Lollipops keep well when stored in a cool, dry environment. For best results, wrap them individually in plastic wrap and store them in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a month.

NOTE: The strength of extracts varies greatly from brand to brand and flavor to flavor. Some, like vanilla, are quite mild, while others, like peppermint and cinnamon, are very strong. It may take some trial and error to determine how much flavoring to add to suit your taste. Never add the flavoring until the candy stops bubbling; if you add it too early, the heat from the candy will just cook off most of the flavor. If you are using flavoring oils, they are much stronger than extracts, so start by adding just ¼ to ½ teaspoon flavoring oil.

VARIATION: To make sour lollipops, add 1 teaspoon of citric acid to the sugar syrup when you add the flavoring and color. Citric acid adds a tart, tangy flavor. For ideas on where to find citric acid, see the Resources section on page 154.



Caramel by the Sea Lollipops

Yield: 8 large (2-inch, or 5-cm) lollipops

Adding a pinch of salt to these caramel lollipops enhances the deep, rich flavor of the caramelized sugar. If you're like me and have a "more is more" food philosophy, finish the pops with an extra sprinkling of crunchy flaked sea salt on top.

1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 ml) water
2¾ ounces or ¼ cup (77 g) light corn syrup
1 teaspoon lemon juice
7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar
1 teaspoon sea salt
2 ounces or 4 tablespoons (56 g) unsalted butter, cubed
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Flaked sea salt, for finishing (optional)

Prepare your hard candy lollipop molds by coating the cavities with a very light layer of nonstick cooking spray or vegetable oil. Insert lollipop sticks into the molds and set aside for now.

In a 2-quart (1.8-L) saucepan, combine the water, light corn syrup, lemon juice, granulated sugar, and sea salt. Place the pan over medium-high heat, and stir until the sugar dissolves. Wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming.

When the sugar syrup comes to a boil, insert a candy thermometer, then gradually add the cubes of butter one at a time and stir them in. Continue to cook the candy, stirring occasionally, until the thermometer reads 300°F (149°C). Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract.

Carefully spoon the hot sugar syrup into the prepared molds, making sure that the tops of the sticks are covered with syrup and are well embedded in the candy. Let the lollipops sit and harden at room temperature until they are completely cool and firm. Once cool, don't pull them out by the sticks. Instead, carefully flex the back of the molds to remove the lollipops without causing any breakage. If desired, sprinkle the tops with a pinch of flaked sea salt.

Lollipops keep well when stored in a cool, dry environment. For best results, wrap them individually in plastic wrap and store them in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a month.



Lemon Meringue Lollipops

Yield: 8 large (2-inch, or 5-cm) lollipops

Who needs a slice of pie when you can have your dessert in lollipop form? These double-decker lollipops consist of a sour citrus layer topped by a sweet vanilla layer of meringue-flavored hard candy.

FOR LEMON LAYER:

- 2 ounces or ¼ cup (56 ml) water
- 3½ ounces or ½ cup (98 g) granulated sugar
- 5½ ounces or ½ cup (154 g) light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon lemon extract
- ¾ teaspoon citric acid (see Note below)
- 2 or 3 drops yellow gel food coloring

FOR MERINGUE LAYER:

- 2 ounces or ¼ cup (56 ml) water
- 3½ ounces or ½ cup (98 g) granulated sugar
- 5½ ounces or ½ cup (154 g) light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon marshmallow flavoring (see Note below)
- 1 teaspoon no-color vanilla extract (see Note below)
- ½ teaspoon white food coloring

This recipe works best with lollipop molds that are at least ¼ inch (6 mm) deep. Prepare your molds by coating the cavities with a very light layer of nonstick cooking spray or vegetable oil.

TO MAKE THE LEMON LAYER: In a small saucepan, combine the water, granulated sugar, and light corn syrup. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. When the sugar syrup comes to a boil, insert a candy thermometer.

Continue to cook the sugar syrup, stirring occasionally, until the thermometer reads 300°F (149°C). Remove the pan from the heat, and let the candy stop bubbling completely. Once it is still, stir in the lemon extract, citric acid, and yellow food coloring.

Carefully spoon the hot sugar syrup into the prepared molds, filling each cavity approximately halfway. Insert the lollipop sticks into the cavities. Let the lemon layer cool while you wash the pan and thermometer and prepare the meringue layer.

TO MAKE THE MERINGUE LAYER: Make the meringue layer the same way you made the lemon layer, cooking and stirring the water, granulated sugar, and light corn syrup in a saucepan. Once the candy reaches 300°F (149°C), remove the pan from the heat, allow the bubbles to stop, then add the marshmallow flavoring, no-color vanilla extract, and white food coloring.

Spoon the syrup on top of the lemon layer, coming all the way to the top of the mold. Let the lollipops sit and harden at room temperature until they are completely cool and firm. Once cool, don't pull them out by the sticks. Instead, carefully flex the back of the molds to remove the lollipops without causing any breakage.

Lollipops keep well when stored in a cool, dry environment. For best results, wrap them individually in plastic wrap and store them in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a month.

NOTE: Citric acid adds a tart, tangy flavor. For ideas on where to find citric acid, see the Resources section on page 154.

Marshmallow flavoring and no-color vanilla extract can be found at many cake and candy supply stores, or a number of online candy supply websites. For ideas on where to find specialty flavors like this, see the Resources section on page 154.



Broken Glass

Yield: 1 pound 2 ounces (504 g)



4 ounces or ½ cup (120 ml) water

8¼ ounces or ¾ cup (231 g) light corn syrup

14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g) granulated sugar

2 to 4 teaspoons flavoring extract (see Note below)

½ teaspoon gel food coloring

½ cup (60 g) powdered sugar

Broken glass candy, sometimes known as “hard tack candy,” is a very traditional hard candy often given as a gift during the holiday season. The recipe is not much different from other lollipop or hard candy recipes, but the presentation is what sets it apart. The candy is poured into a thin layer and then shattered into small pieces that resemble beautiful fragments of stained glass. Broken glass is traditionally coated in a layer of powdered sugar, both for aesthetic reasons and to prevent the pieces from sticking together.

Line a baking sheet with a nonstick silicone mat or a layer of aluminum foil sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

In a medium saucepan, combine the water, corn syrup, and granulated sugar. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. When the sugar syrup comes to a boil, insert a candy thermometer.

Continue to cook the sugar syrup, stirring occasionally, until the thermometer reads 300°F (149°C). Remove the pan from the heat, and let the candy stop bubbling completely. Once it is still, stir in the flavoring extract and food coloring. If you want to make two different colors and flavors of broken glass candy from one batch, pour half of the sugar syrup into a separate pan before you add the extract and food coloring. Work quickly and add different colors and flavors to the two batches, so that the candy does not start to set in the pans.

Pour the candy out onto the prepared baking sheet and let it spread into a thin layer. Cool the candy completely at room temperature. Once it is set, pull it up from the sheet and crack it into small pieces by banging it against a cutting board or shattering it with a knife handle.

Place the powdered sugar in a zip-top plastic bag and add the shards of candy. Shake the bag until the candy is coated with the powdered sugar. Store the candy in an airtight container at room temperature. If kept well wrapped in a low-humidity environment, this candy can last for several months.

NOTE: The strength of extracts varies greatly from brand to brand and flavor to flavor. It may take a little trial and error to determine how much flavoring to add to suit your taste. If you are using flavoring oils, they are much stronger than extracts, so start by adding just ½ teaspoon flavoring oil.

Butterscotch Buttons

Yield: 10 ounces (280 g), or about 40 small (¾-inch, or 2-cm) candies

I'm sorry to break it to you alcohol enthusiasts, but these candies do not contain any actual Scotch. On the bright side, they do have plenty of rich, buttery flavor! Consider adding a dash of rum extract to turn these into “butter rum” lozenges.

2⅔ ounces or ⅓ cup (75 ml) water

2⅔ ounces or ⅓ cup (75 ml) heavy cream

7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar

1½ ounces or 3 tablespoons (42 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

½ teaspoon vanilla extract



You can either use silicone molds to make these candies or make free-form circles by hand. If you are going to pour them into circles, cover two baking sheets with silicone mats or aluminum foil sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

In a 2-quart (1.8-L) saucepan, combine the water, heavy cream, granulated sugar, salt, and cream of tartar over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. When the sugar syrup comes to a boil, insert a candy thermometer.

When the candy reaches 240°F (115°C), add the butter and stir it in. Continue to cook the candy, stirring occasionally, until it reaches 280°F (138°C). At this point, remove the pan from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract.

If you are using silicone molds, quickly spoon the butterscotch into the cavities and let the candy set completely. Once set, pop out the Butterscotch Buttons. If you are pouring the candy into circles, use a small spoon to drop spoonfuls of the hot syrup onto the prepared baking sheets. Work quickly, before the candy starts to set, and leave a little space in between each drop because they will spread. Allow the drops to set completely, then gently lift them from the baking sheet.

Store Butterscotch Buttons in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Fruit Chews

Yield: 10 ounces (280 g), or about 24 medium (1 x 1-inch, or 2.5 x 2.5-cm) chews

If caramels and lollipops had a baby, the result would be these Fruit Chews. They have the wonderfully soft and supple texture of the best caramels, paired with the clean, vibrant fruit flavor of traditional lollipops. Any fruit-flavored extract will work with this recipe, but I especially recommend those with a little tanginess, like lemon, orange, raspberry, or sour apple.

2 ounces or 4 tablespoons (56 g) unsalted butter

5½ ounces or ½ cup (154 g) light corn syrup

5¼ ounces or ¾ cup (161 g) granulated sugar

1 teaspoon fruit-flavored extract

½ teaspoon citric acid (see Note below)

1 or 2 drops gel food coloring

Line a 9 x 5-inch (23 x 12.7-cm) loaf pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

In a medium saucepan, combine the butter, corn syrup, and granulated sugar. Place the saucepan over medium-high heat, and stir until the butter melts and the sugar dissolves. Wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. When the sugar syrup comes to a boil, insert a candy thermometer.

Continue to boil the candy, stirring occasionally, until the thermometer reads 245°F (118°C). This temperature will produce a candy that is soft enough to chew but holds its shape fairly well. For softer candies, cook the syrup to 242°F (116.7°C), and for firmer candies, cook it to 248°F (120°C).

Once at the proper temperature, remove the pan from the heat and stir in the extract, citric acid, and food coloring. Pour the candy into the prepared pan. Let it set at room temperature until it is completely cool and firm.

Once firm, remove the candy from the pan and peel off the foil backing. Use a large sharp knife to cut it into small 1 x 1-inch (2.5 x 2.5-cm) squares. Wrap the squares in waxed paper so they don't stick together or lose their shape. Store Fruit Chews in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a month.

NOTE: Citric acid is an optional ingredient, but it adds a tanginess that makes the fruit flavors more realistic. For ideas on where to find citric acid, see the Resources section on page 154.



Saltwater Taffy

**Yield: 2 pounds (908 g), or about 100
(1-inch, or 2.5-cm) pieces**

“Saltwater Taffy” is a bit of a misnomer, because this recipe doesn’t require a field trip to the ocean for the necessary saltwater. Nevertheless, one taste of this soft and chewy candy will immediately call to mind warm, lazy summer days spent by the shore. Pulling taffy takes a little time, but the process can be made faster and more enjoyable by recruiting a friend to help you.

4 ounces or ½ cup (120 ml) water

**11 ounces or 1 cup (308 g) light
corn syrup**

**14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g)
granulated sugar**

¾ teaspoon salt

**1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 g)
unsalted butter**

1 teaspoon flavoring extract

**1 ounce or ¼ cup (28 g) marshmallow
creme**

3 or 4 drops gel food coloring



Spray a rimmed baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray.

Combine the water, corn syrup, granulated sugar, and salt in a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. When the sugar syrup comes to a boil, insert a candy thermometer.

Cook the syrup, without stirring, until the thermometer reaches 255°F (124°C). This temperature will produce a wonderfully soft and chewy taffy. If you like your taffy stiffer, cook it to 260°F (126.7°C) for a medium-firm taffy or 265°F (129.5°C) for a very firm taffy. Once at the proper temperature, remove the pan from the heat, add the butter and flavoring, and stir until the butter melts and everything is well mixed.

Pour the candy onto the prepared baking sheet and let it spread out. Add the marshmallow creme and food coloring on top. Let the candy cool until it starts to set around the edges, about 5 to 10 minutes. Slide a spatula under one edge

(continued on next page)

Saltwater Taffy (continued)

of the candy and fold it into the center, over the marshmallow creme, then fold the other edges of the candy into the middle, making a compact package.

Put on food-safe plastic gloves to protect your hands, and spray your gloves with nonstick spray. Gather up the candy and knead it together in your hands until the marshmallow creme and coloring are mixed in. Holding the candy in both hands, pull your hands apart, stretching the candy into a rope between them. Bring your hands back together, twist the candy together, and repeat the pulling process. At first the taffy will droop and fall, but as you continue to pull the taffy, it will cool down and become firmer and easier to manipulate.

Continue to pull the taffy for 20 minutes, until it holds its shape well and becomes difficult to pull. You will start to see parallel ridges in the pulled candy toward the end of the process—this is a sign the taffy is ready.

Divide the taffy into quarters to make it easier to work with. Roll the taffy into a long thin rope about ½ inch (1.3 cm) in diameter. Use oiled kitchen shears or a sharp knife to cut it into small 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces, and repeat with the remaining taffy. Wrap the taffy in waxed paper to help it keep its shape and prevent it from sticking together.

Store Saltwater Taffy in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. You can keep it longer, but over time it will start to lose its soft and chewy texture.

VARIATION: To make striped taffy, prepare two baking sheets, and divide the sugar syrup evenly between them. Add half of the marshmallow creme to each batch, and add different colors on top. Pull each batch individually, and roll them into long thin ropes. Twist the ropes of different colored taffy together, then pull them thin so that the colors blend. Cut and wrap the striped taffy as usual.





D



E



F



G



H



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K



L

HOW TO MAKE SALTWATER TAFFY

- A.** Combine the water, corn syrup, sugar, and salt in a medium saucepan.
- B.** Bring the sugar syrup to a boil and cook it to 255°F (124°C).
- C.** Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the butter and flavoring extract.
- D.** Pour the candy onto a baking sheet sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.
- E.** Add the marshmallow creme and food coloring on top of the candy and let it cool until the edges start to set.
- F.** Slide a spatula under the edge of the candy and fold it into the center.
- G.** Bring all of the candy together into a packet.
- H.** Knead the candy together with your hands until the marshmallow creme and coloring are mixed in. Begin to pull the candy apart between your hands.
- I.** At first the candy will be soft and will droop, but continue to pull it for 20 minutes.
- J.** By the end, the candy will hold its shape and will show parallel ridges when you pull it between your hands.
- K.** Roll the taffy into thin ropes and cut it into small 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces.
- L.** Wrap the individual pieces of taffy in waxed paper.

Fondant



These days, fondant might be best known as the thick sugar paste used to cover wedding cakes and specialty desserts. But don't confuse that fondant—known as “rolled fondant”—with traditional candy fondant. Candy fondant is a versatile sugar-based dough that can be used to make everything from soft cream centers to the liquid filling in chocolate-covered cherries.

In its simplest state, fondant is a simple mix of sugar, corn syrup, and water—not much different than a basic lollipop recipe! But whereas the goal with lollipops and other sugar candy is to avoid crystallization, making fondant depends on the formation of crystals through a precise heating, cooling, and stirring process. You will be amazed to see how your thin, clear fondant syrup can be transformed into a thick, opaque candy dough just by the act of stirring.

It is true that tubs of fondant are readily available in many candy supply and craft stores. However, the taste and texture of store-bought fondant cannot compare to the freshness of fondant made at home. If you are ready to try these recipes for smooth buttercreams, creamy mint patties, chocolate-covered cherries, and more, do your taste buds a favor and start with a batch of homemade fondant.

* Troubleshooting Fondant *

My fondant is unpleasantly grainy.

After it is boiled, fondant needs to cool to a specific temperature before it can be stirred. If the fondant is agitated before it has cooled properly, large sugar crystals might form, resulting in a grainy texture to the finished fondant.

My fondant is too soft.

Soft fondant can be caused by several factors. If it is humid, the fondant can be absorbing the moisture from the air, resulting in a soft and sticky candy. It is also possible that the sugar syrup was not cooked to a high enough temperature. Make sure your thermometer is calibrated following the directions on page 23, and carefully cook the sugar syrup to the prescribed temperature. Finally, it could be that the fondant was not agitated enough during the stirring stage. There is no risk of overworking fondant, so if you are not sure whether the fondant is done, continue to stir a little longer. For a quick fix, try kneading in small amounts of powdered sugar until it is firm enough to work with.

My fondant is old and hard to knead.

If you have old fondant that is too stiff to knead by hand, microwave it in 5-second bursts, turning it after every 5 seconds so that it heats evenly. Try to knead it after every microwave session, and stop heating it once you are able to knead it by hand. Soften the fondant by kneading it like bread dough until it is smooth and supple.

Old-Fashioned Fondant

Yield: 2 pounds (908 g)

Old-Fashioned Fondant may not have the most exciting name, but what it lacks in sex appeal it makes up for with versatility. This mild-mannered fondant is the foundational ingredient for the rest of the fondant recipes in this book, and you'll find suggestions below for how to flavor and enjoy this fondant on its own.

4 ounces or ½ cup (120 ml) water

5½ ounces or ½ cup (154 g) light corn syrup

1 pound 12 ounces or 4 cups (784 g) granulated sugar

Powdered sugar, for dusting

In a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan, combine the water, corn syrup, and granulated sugar. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. When the sugar syrup comes to a boil, insert a candy thermometer.

Cook the syrup, without stirring, until the thermometer reaches 238°F (114°C). Pour the syrup into a 9 x 13-inch (23 x 33-cm) pan, but do not scrape down the sides and bottom of the saucepan. Insert the candy thermometer, and let the syrup cool, undisturbed, until it reaches 120°F (49°C).

Once at 120°F (50°C), use a stiff plastic or wooden spoon to start stirring the fondant in a figure-eight pattern. Swirl the spoon through the candy, then gather it all together in the center of the pan and repeat. During this process, the clear, sticky syrup will gradually become more creamy and opaque.

Continue to stir the fondant as it becomes thicker, until eventually it is stiff and difficult to stir. It might even become so stiff that it starts to crumble. Once you can no longer stir it, wet your hands and gather the fondant into a ball. Dust a work surface with powdered sugar and knead the fondant like bread dough until the texture has smoothed out, any crumbliness is gone, and it is supple and pliable.

If you want to add flavoring or coloring to the fondant (see Variations, below), shape it into a disc and add the flavoring or coloring to the center. Fold the fondant over on itself and knead until the flavoring or color is well dispersed, dusting your hands and the fondant with powdered sugar as necessary to prevent it from getting too sticky. Wrap the fondant well in plastic wrap and for the best texture, allow it to sit overnight before using it.

Old-Fashioned Fondant can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a month.

NOTE: You can also make fondant with a mixer instead of stirring by hand. To use a mixer, pour the cooked sugar syrup into a mixing bowl and cool it to 120°F (50°C). Once cooled, mix the fondant on medium speed until it is thick, white, and opaque, about 10 to 12 minutes. If necessary, knead it by hand to smooth it out at the end.

VARIATIONS: To make **chocolate fondant**, melt 4 ounces (112 g) dark chocolate and let it cool to room temperature. Add the melted chocolate to 1 pound (454 g) fondant and knead them together by hand or mix them together in a mixer until the chocolate is completely incorporated.





HOW TO MAKE OLD-FASHIONED FONDANT

- A.** Combine the water, corn syrup, and sugar in a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan over medium-high heat, and bring it to a boil.
- B.** Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush.
- C.** Cook the sugar syrup to 238°F (114°C).
- D.** Pour the syrup into a 9 x 13-inch (23 x 33-cm) pan and let it cool to 120°F (50°C).
- E.** Begin to stir the syrup in a figure-eight pattern with a stiff spoon.
- F.** The syrup will start to lose its shine and become white and creamy.
- G.** As you stir, the candy will become thicker and more opaque.
- H.** Finally, the fondant will be so stiff it will be difficult to stir.
- I.** Knead the fondant like bread dough until it becomes smooth.
- J.** When the fondant is shiny and pliable, wrap it well and let it sit overnight.



TO COLOR AND FLAVOR FONDANT:

- A.** Form the fondant into a disc and add the desired colors and flavorings. Fold the fondant over on itself.
- B.** Knead the fondant on a work surface dusted with powdered sugar.
- C.** Continue kneading until the color and flavoring are completely incorporated.

To make **coconut fondant**, add 1½ teaspoons coconut extract to 1 pound (454 g) fondant and knead it in. Roll the fondant into small balls, and roll the balls in shredded sweetened coconut.

To make **nutty fondant**, knead together 5 ounces or ½ cup (140 g) praline paste or nut butter and 1 pound (454 g) fondant. Roll the fondant into small balls, and roll the balls in crushed nuts.

To make **s'mores fondant**, knead 1¼ ounces or ½ cup (35 g) miniature marshmallows into chocolate fondant. Roll the fondant into small balls, and roll the balls in coarsely crushed graham crackers.

Peanut Butter and Jelly Fondant Sandwiches

Yield: 36 candies



I admit that my school lunches were never this exciting! The lunchbox favorite gets a candy makeover in this recipe for Peanut Butter and Jelly Fondant Sandwiches. Alternating stripes of peanut butter and raspberry fondant form the centers of these squares, which are dipped in peanut butter coating and topped with a pinch of freeze-dried berries or chopped peanuts.

1 pound (454 g) Old-Fashioned Fondant (page 52)

Powdered sugar, for dusting

3¼ ounces or ⅓ cup (91 g) smooth peanut butter

⅛ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon raspberry flavoring

⅛ teaspoon citric acid (see Note below)

Red and purple gel food coloring

12 ounces (336 g) peanut butter-flavored candy coating

Chopped freeze-dried berries or chopped peanuts, for decorating (optional)

Divide the fondant into two 8-ounce (227-g) portions. Dust your hands and a work surface with powdered sugar, and knead together one 8-ounce (227-g) portion of fondant with the peanut butter and salt. Knead until the fondant is smooth and the peanut butter is completely mixed in. Wrap the peanut butter fondant in plastic wrap and set it aside for a moment.

Add the raspberry flavoring, the citric acid, and a few drops of red and purple food coloring to the other 8-ounce (227-g) portion of fondant and knead everything together.

Place the raspberry fondant between two sheets of parchment or waxed paper and roll out into a thin rectangle 6 inches (15 cm) wide by 12 inches (30.5 cm) long. Roll the peanut butter fondant until it is also a 6 x 12-inch (15 x 30.5-cm) rectangle and refrigerate both fondant rectangles until firm.

Once firm, carefully place the raspberry fondant on top of the peanut butter fondant and gently roll over them with a rolling pin to press them together. Cut the fondant rectangle in half, so that you have two squares 6 inches (15 cm) across. Trim any uneven edges so that your squares are neat and tidy. Stack one square on top of the other, so you are left with one 6 x 6-inch (15 x 15-cm) square comprised of 4 alternating layers of peanut butter and raspberry fondant. Cut the fondant into 36 small 1-inch (2.5-cm) squares. If it is too soft to cut cleanly, refrigerate it briefly until it can be neatly cut.

Melt the peanut butter-flavored candy coating in the microwave. Dip each fondant sandwich into the melted coating, and place the dipped pieces on a piece of parchment or waxed paper. If desired, sprinkle the tops with chopped freeze-dried berries or peanuts while the coating is still wet. Let the coating set completely at room temperature before serving.

Store Peanut Butter and Jelly Fondant Sandwiches in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

NOTE: Citric acid adds a tart, tangy flavor to the raspberry fondant. For ideas on where to find citric acid, see the Resources section on page 154.

Soft Buttercreams

Yield: 24 candies



These melt-in-your-mouth buttercreams have a texture that is so soft and creamy, they have to be formed in chocolate molds. You can make them using any flavoring extract you like, but I think they are particularly nice when made with fruit or mint flavors.

12 ounces (336 g) chocolate of your choice, melted and tempered (see page 26)

6 ounces (168 g) freshly made Old-Fashioned Fondant (page 52)

1 to 2 ounces (28 to 56 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

Food coloring of your choice

Flavoring extracts of your choice

Line twenty-four 1-inch (2.5-cm) chocolate molds with tempered chocolate, following the instructions on page 31. Make sure the chocolate lining the molds is completely set.

Mix the fondant and 1 ounce (28 g) softened butter in a mixer until it is smooth and soft. If the fondant you are using is very stiff, or if you enjoy a stronger butter flavor, add the remaining 1 ounce (28 g) butter to get your ideal taste and texture. If you would like to make different flavors of buttercream from one batch, divide the buttercream into different bowls and add a small amount of food coloring and flavoring extract, to taste, to each bowl.

Pipe or spoon the buttercream mixture into the prepared molds, being sure to leave room at the top to seal the molds with chocolate. Once the molds are filled, refrigerate the molds for 20 minutes until the buttercream mixture is firm.

Seal the tops of the molds with tempered chocolate and let the chocolate set for 20 minutes at room temperature, then refrigerate them for 10 minutes more. Once set, carefully remove the chocolates from the molds and let them come to room temperature before serving.

Store Soft Buttercreams in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, but for the best taste and texture, serve them at room temperature.

Melting Mint Patties

Yield: 72 candies

It can happen to the best of us: we walk into a movie theater with a large box of chocolate-covered mint patties, and we walk out two hours later with a mysteriously empty box, a stomachache, and incriminating chocolate smudges on our fingers. If you have ever had this experience, then you know what I mean when I say that these soft, creamy mints covered in chocolate are dangerously addictive.

These candies need to be made a few days in advance to allow the filling enough time to soften and “melt,” but if you can’t wait that long, the combination of refreshingly minty fondant and semisweet chocolate is still delicious.

Powdered sugar, for dusting

**1 pound (454 g) freshly made
Old-Fashioned Fondant (page 52)**

$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon peppermint extract

**$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon invertase (see sidebar
below)**

**1 pound (454 g) dark chocolate,
melted and tempered
(see page 26)**

Dust your work surface and your hands with powdered sugar, and knead together the fondant, peppermint extract, and invertase. Alternately, you can chop the fondant into pieces and mix the fondant, extract, and invertase together on low speed in a mixer using the paddle attachment.

Roll the fondant into small balls about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1.3 cm) wide and place them on a parchment-lined baking sheet. You should get about 6 dozen small balls from the fondant. Gently press down on top of each ball so that it is a disc almost $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2 cm) wide. Refrigerate the discs until completely firm.

Once firm, dip the mint patties into the tempered chocolate and let them set at room temperature. Check the patties, and if any of them have areas on the sides or bottom that are not covered with chocolate, dip them again. Because the centers get so soft, the filling will leak out of any undipped areas. When the chocolate is completely set, store the mint patties in an airtight container at room temperature for 4 to 5 days to give the centers time to soften and liquefy.

After they have softened, Melting Mint Patties can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.



WHAT IS INVERTASE?

Invertase is a naturally occurring enzyme that, when added to sugar-based candies, gradually breaks down the sugar molecules and causes the candy’s texture to soften. It’s most commonly available as a clear liquid.

The amount of invertase needed depends upon the recipe and the desired final texture, but in general it only takes a small amount of invertase to soften firm candies—between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon invertase per pound (454 g) of fondant is a good guideline. It usually takes anywhere from 4 to 10 days for the invertase to work, so be prepared to make your candies in advance. Candies made with invertase should be kept at room temperature because cold temperatures can slow the enzyme’s reaction.

Chocolate-Covered Cherries

Yield: 30 candies

Chocolate-Covered Cherries seem like the best kind of kitchen wizardry: a juicy cherry, surrounded by sweet syrup, all encased in a round chocolate shell. To quote from late-night infomercials, “How DO they do that?!” Fear not—what first appears to be an intimidating and complex process is actually a simple matter of dipping cherries into melted fondant, dipping them again in chocolate, and then—this is the tricky part!—waiting a week for the centers to liquefy. The delay might be agonizing, but the reward of juicy, syrupy cherries is well worth the wait.



1 (10-ounce, or 280-g) jar maraschino cherries with stems (to yield about 30 cherries)

1 pound (454 g) freshly made Old-Fashioned Fondant (page 52)

½ teaspoon invertase (see sidebar, page 56)

½ teaspoon almond extract

Pink food coloring (optional)

1 pound (454 g) dark chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

Drain the cherries but reserve the liquid. Spread the cherries in a single layer on paper towels and carefully pat them dry.

Fill the bottom pan of a double boiler with water, and bring it to a simmer. Place the fondant in the top pan of the double boiler and place it over the simmering water. Heat the fondant, stirring frequently, until it is liquid. Add a candy thermometer and continue to heat the fondant until it reaches 160°F (71°C).

Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the invertase, almond extract, and pink food coloring, if desired. Hold a cherry by the stem and dip it until it is submerged in the fondant. Pull it out of the fondant, letting the excess drip back into the pan. Set the cherry down on a parchment-covered baking sheet and make sure the stem is pointing straight up.

Repeat until all of the cherries are dipped. If the fondant starts to get too thick, place it back over the water bath to warm it, and add a spoonful or two of reserved cherry juice as necessary to thin it into a dippable consistency.

Let the cherries sit at room temperature for 10 minutes, until the fondant is completely set and hard.

Dip the fondant-covered cherries into the tempered chocolate, making sure the chocolate completely covers the fondant up to the top of the stem. If any part of the cherry remains uncovered, the liquefying fondant will leak out, so it's important to dip the cherries carefully and thoroughly. Let the chocolate set at room temperature, then store the cherries in an airtight container for a week to give the fondant time to liquefy. Once liquid, Chocolate-Covered Cherries can be stored for an additional 2 weeks at room temperature.

Caramels



The best caramels perform a delicate balancing act. They hold their shape and have a chewy “pull” when you bite into them, but they quickly soften and dissolve in your mouth. They have the deep flavor of long-boiled sugar, cooked until fragrant and caramelized, but the sweetness is tempered by the rich taste of cooked butter and cream. The contradictions between these competing flavors and textures are what make caramels such a complex, delicious candy. The recipes in this chapter highlight the best of what caramels have to offer by pairing them with spices, nuts, fruit, flowers, chocolate, and more.

* Troubleshooting Caramels *

My caramels are too soft.

Caramels that are too soft have not been cooked to a high enough temperature. Make sure that your candy thermometer is calibrated, as described on page 23, and be very mindful of the temperature when cooking your next batch of caramels. Even a difference of two or three degrees can have a powerful effect on the texture of the finished caramel.

In most instances, it is possible to recook your caramels to try and make them firmer. Scrape the soft caramel into a large saucepan and add ½ cup (120 ml) of water. Stir the mixture over low heat until the caramel melts, then increase the heat and insert a candy thermometer. Cook the caramel until it reaches the prescribed temperature. Add flavoring extracts, because the extended boiling time will have cooked off the original flavoring. The recooked caramels will be a darker color, because the dairy has had more time to caramelize. If you don't want to recook, you can melt them with additional cream to make a delicious caramel dessert sauce.

My caramels are too hard.

Again, the problem of caramel texture comes down to the final cooking temperature. If the caramels are too hard, they have been cooked to too high a temperature. You can attempt to recook them using the method described above. If you don't want to recook them, consider chopping them up into small pieces and using them as caramel chips for baking.

How can I get my caramels just right?

Although nothing can beat the accuracy of a well-calibrated candy thermometer, I think that the cold water test, described on page 24, is the best way of achieving the perfect caramel texture. The problem comes down to personal preference: one person's ideal caramel may be considered “too firm” or “too soft” by someone else. You can bypass this problem entirely by checking the texture of the caramel as it cooks. Once the cooking caramel reaches 240°F (115.5°C), begin performing the cold water test periodically by dipping a spoonful of cooked caramel into a bowl of very cold water. After a few moments, taste the caramel, and when it reaches the texture you desire, remove your caramels from the heat. If you are adding butter after the caramels have cooked, keep in mind that this will soften the caramels a bit, so cook them a little firmer than you would otherwise.



A



B



C



D

HOW TO MAKE CARAMELS

Every caramel recipe is a little different, but here is a general guide to making traditional caramels.

A. Combine the cream and butter in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium-low heat. Remove the pan from the heat and cover it to keep the dairy warm.

B. In a separate saucepan, combine the corn syrup and sugar over medium-high heat and stir until the sugar dissolves. Cover the pan and bring the mixture to a boil. Boil, covered, for 4 minutes, then remove the lid.

C. Insert a candy thermometer and cook without stirring until the temperature is 320°F (160°C).

D. Pour the warm cream into the hot sugar syrup and stir.



E



F



G



H

E. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, as the mixture becomes darker and more fragrant. Cook the caramel to 250°F (121°C) for soft caramels, or 255°F (124°C) for firm caramels.

F. Remove the pan from the heat and add the remaining butter and additional flavorings as desired.

G. Pour the caramel into the prepared pan and let it set at room temperature until firm.

H. Use a large sharp knife to cut the caramel into small pieces. Wrap the caramel squares individually in waxed paper.

Autumn Caramels

Yield: 1 pound 14 ounces (840 g)



If you omit the spices, this is a perfect recipe for classic caramels, full of deep, toasty sugar flavors and a hint of rich butter. I urge you, though, to give the spices a try. The warm fall flavors of cinnamon, cloves, and vanilla are a wonderful match for the caramelized sugar, and you just might find you don't want to go back to plain caramels again.

- 1 vanilla bean**
- 2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half**
- 6 whole cloves, coarsely crushed**
- 1 whole allspice, coarsely crushed**
- 12 ounces or 1½ cups (336 ml) heavy cream**
- 4 ounces or 8 tablespoons (112 g) unsalted butter, divided**
- 11 ounces or 1 cup (308 g) light corn syrup**
- 14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g) granulated sugar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

Line an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

Split the vanilla bean lengthwise and scrape out the seeds. In a small saucepan, place the vanilla bean seeds, the scraped vanilla pod, the cinnamon sticks, the crushed cloves, the crushed allspice, the heavy cream, and 2 ounces (56 g) of the butter. Place the pan over medium heat and bring the mixture to a low boil. Remove the pan from the heat, cover it with a tight-fitting lid, and let it sit for 30 minutes to infuse the flavors.

After 30 minutes, combine the corn syrup and the granulated sugar in a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan and place the pan over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves and the mixture comes to a boil. Cover the pan with a lid and let it boil for 4 minutes, so the condensation will wash the sugar crystals from the sides of the pan.

Remove the lid and insert a candy thermometer. Continue to cook the sugar, without stirring, until it reaches 320°F (160°C) on the candy thermometer. Once at 320°F (160°C), carefully pour the warm cream through a strainer into the hot sugar syrup, straining out the vanilla pod, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and allspice. The mixture will bubble and splatter a great deal, and the temperature will drop.

Cook the caramel, stirring frequently, until it reaches 250°F (121°C). This will give you a soft, chewy caramel. If you prefer firmer caramels, cook the candy to 255°F (124°C).

Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the remaining 2 ounces (56 g) butter, the salt, and the vanilla extract, then pour the caramel into the prepared pan. Let it set at room temperature until firm, at least 4 hours or overnight. Once set, remove the candy from the pan and peel off the foil from the back. Use a large sharp knife to cut the caramels into small squares. Wrap each individual caramel in waxed paper to prevent them from sticking together or losing their shape. Store Autumn Caramels in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Mango–Macadamia Nut Caramels

Yield: 1 pound 4 ounces (560 g)

Enjoy a taste of the tropics with these exotic caramels. Packed with salty macadamia nuts and the intense flavor of mango purée, these candies will have you donning a grass skirt and dancing the hula in no time.

5 ounces or 1 cup (140 g) toasted, salted macadamia nuts, coarsely chopped (see page 35)

1 pound 2 ounces or 2 cups (504 g) mango juice, strained

7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar

7½ ounces or 1 cup (210 g) packed brown sugar

1 tablespoon (15 ml) fresh lemon juice

4 ounces (112 g) unsalted butter

2⅔ ounces or ⅓ cup (80 ml) heavy cream

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Line an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray. Scatter the macadamia nuts over the bottom of the pan.

Pour the mango juice into a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan and place the pan over medium heat. Bring the juice to a boil and cook it, stirring frequently to prevent scorching, until it reduces down to ⅓ cup (80 ml) of liquid. Depending on your stove, this will take 30 to 40 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and stir in both sugars, the lemon juice, the butter, the cream, and the salt. Return the pan to medium-high heat and stir until the sugar dissolves, then bring the mixture to a boil. Wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. Insert a candy thermometer and cook the caramel, stirring occasionally, until the thermometer reads 245°F (118°C). This produces a caramel with a medium-firm texture. For a stiffer caramel, cook it to 248°F (120°C), and for a softer caramel, cook it to 242°F (116.7°C).

Take the pan off the heat and stir in the vanilla. Pour the caramel over the nuts in the pan and let it set at room temperature until firm, about 4 hours or overnight. Once set, remove the candy from the pan and peel off the foil from the back. Use a large sharp knife to cut the caramels into small squares. Wrap each individual caramel in waxed paper to prevent them from sticking together or losing their shape. Store Mango–Macadamia Nut Caramels in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.



Lavender Caramels

Yield: 1 pound (454 g)



- 8 ounces or 1 cup (235 ml) heavy cream**
- 2½ ounces or 5 tablespoons (70 g) unsalted butter**
- 1 tablespoon dried lavender**
- 2 ounces or ¼ cup (60 ml) water**
- 2¾ ounces or ¼ cup (77 g) light corn syrup**
- 10½ ounces or 1½ cups (294 g) granulated sugar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**

The delicate flavor of lavender is a sweet surprise in this caramel recipe. The floral fragrance can sometimes be overpowering in desserts and push them toward the “soap and lotion” end of the taste spectrum, but this recipe nicely balances the flavors of caramelized sugar with light and subtle lavender notes.

Line an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

In a small saucepan, combine the cream, butter, and lavender. Place the pan over medium heat and bring the mixture to a low boil. Remove the pan from the heat, cover it with a tight-fitting lid, and let it sit for 20 minutes to infuse the flavors.

After 20 minutes, combine the water, corn syrup, sugar, and salt in a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan and place the pan over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves and the mixture comes to a boil. Cover the pan with a lid and let it boil for 4 minutes, so the condensation will wash the sugar crystals from the sides of the pan.

Remove the lid and insert a candy thermometer. Continue to cook the sugar, without stirring, until it reaches 320°F (160°C) on the candy thermometer. Once at 320°F (160°C), carefully pour the warm cream through a wire-mesh strainer into the hot sugar syrup, straining out the lavender. The mixture will bubble and splatter a great deal, and the temperature will drop.

Cook the caramel, stirring frequently, until it reaches 250°F (121°C). This will give you a soft, chewy caramel. If you prefer firmer caramels, cook the candy to 255°F (124°C). Remove the pan from the heat and pour the caramel into the prepared pan.

Let the caramel set at room temperature until firm, at least 4 hours or overnight. Once set, remove the candy from the pan and peel off the foil from the back. Use a large sharp knife to cut the caramels into small squares. Wrap each individual caramel in waxed paper to prevent them from sticking together or losing their shape. Store Lavender Caramels in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Pecan Pie Caramels

Yield: 1½ pounds (681 g)

This recipe is inspired by my husband Jason, who has never met a pecan pie he didn't like. These caramels might be missing flaky pie crust, but they have every other element of Jason's favorite pecan pie recipe: the rich taste of brown sugar, a dash of cinnamon and maple syrup, and a generous helping of crunchy, toasted pecans.

- 8 ounces or 1 cup (235 ml) heavy cream**
- 3 ounces or 6 tablespoons (84 g) unsalted butter**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**
- 3½ ounces or ½ cup (98 g) granulated sugar**
- 3¾ ounces or ½ cup (105 g) packed brown sugar**
- 5½ ounces or ½ cup (154 g) pure maple syrup**
- 2¾ ounces or ¼ cup (77 g) light corn syrup**
- 2 ounces or ¼ cup (60 ml) water**
- 1½ teaspoons cinnamon**
- 3½ ounces or 1 cup (98 g) toasted pecans, coarsely chopped (see page 33)**

Line an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with non-stick cooking spray.

In a small saucepan, combine the cream, butter, and salt. Place the pan over medium heat and bring the mixture to a low boil. Remove the pan from the heat and cover it with a lid to keep warm.

In a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan, combine both sugars, the maple syrup, the corn syrup, and the water. Place the pan over medium-high heat, stir until the sugars dissolve, and bring the mixture to a boil. Wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent crystallization.

Insert a candy thermometer and continue to cook the sugar, without stirring, until it reaches 240°F (115°C). Once it reaches this temperature, add the warm cream and carefully stir it in. The mixture will bubble and splatter a great deal, and the temperature will drop.

Cook the caramel, stirring frequently, until it reaches 245°F (118°C). This will give you a soft, chewy caramel. If you prefer firmer caramels, cook the candy to 248°F (120°C). Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the cinnamon and the pecans. Pour the caramel into the prepared pan.

Let the caramel set at room temperature until firm, at least 4 hours or overnight. Once set, remove the candy from the pan and peel off the foil from the back. Use a large sharp knife to cut the caramels into small pieces. Wrap each individual caramel in waxed paper to prevent them from sticking together or losing their shape. Store Pecan Pie Caramels in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.



Sea Salt Caramels

Yield: 2 pounds 10 ounces (1176 g)

True confession time: I rarely leave these caramels unadorned. While I love the combination of salt and caramel, I think both flavors are greatly improved with the addition of dark chocolate. When I make these caramels—which is on an alarmingly regular basis—I usually can't resist dipping them partially or completely in a coating of melted chocolate. If you want to follow my lead, leave off the final dusting of flaked sea salt until the caramels are dipped, then sprinkle that pinch of salt on top of the chocolate.

1 pound or 2 cups (470 ml) heavy cream

5½ ounces or ½ cup (154 g) sweetened condensed milk

1 teaspoon sea salt

4 ounces or ½ cup (120 ml) water

1 pound 6 ounces or 2 cups (616 g) light corn syrup

14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g) granulated sugar

4 ounces or ½ cup (112 g) unsalted butter, cubed, at room temperature

Flaked sea salt, for finishing

Line a 9 x 9-inch (23 x 23-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

In a small saucepan, combine the cream, sweetened condensed milk, and salt. Place the pan over medium heat and bring the mixture to a low boil.

Remove the pan from the heat and cover it with a lid to keep warm.

In a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan, combine the water, light corn syrup, and granulated sugar. Place the pan over medium-high heat, stir until the sugar dissolves, and bring the mixture to a boil. Wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent crystallization.

Insert a candy thermometer and continue to cook the sugar, without stirring, until it reaches 250°F (121°C). Once it reaches this temperature, add the cubed butter and the warm cream and carefully stir everything together. The mixture will bubble and splatter a great deal, and the temperature will drop.

Cook the caramel, stirring frequently to avoid scorching, until it reaches 245°F (118.3°C) and is a golden brown color, about 30 minutes. Pour the caramel into the prepared pan, but don't scrape the bottom and sides of the pan.

Let the caramel set at room temperature until firm, at least 4 hours or overnight. Once set, remove the candy from the pan and peel off the foil from the back. Use a large sharp knife to cut the caramels into small pieces. Sprinkle the top of each piece with a pinch of flaked sea salt. Wrap each individual caramel in waxed paper to prevent them from sticking together or losing their shape. Store Sea Salt Caramels in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.



Caramel Crunch Candy Bars

Yield: 8 candy bars, approximately
2¾ ounces (77 g) each

How can you improve upon sweet, chewy caramel? By adding crispy cereal and dark chocolate, of course! These easy candy bars can be made with any caramel recipe in this book, or with store-bought soft caramels. You will need an uncut block of homemade caramel, approximately 8 x 4 inches (20 x 10 cm), or follow the instructions below to melt together individually wrapped homemade or store-bought chipotle chile powder.

8 ounces (224 g) soft caramels

**2 ounces or about 2 cups (54 g)
crispy rice cereal**

**12 ounces (336 g) dark chocolate,
melted and tempered
(see page 26)**

Line an 8 x 4-inch (20 x 10-cm) loaf pan with foil and spray with nonstick cooking spray.

If you are using caramels that are individually wrapped, unwrap them and place them in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat them in 30-second intervals until melted, then pour into the prepared pan. Refrigerate the caramel block until it has set, about 45 minutes.

Cut the caramels widthwise into 8 strips, approximately 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide and 4 inches (10 cm) long. If necessary, refrigerate the caramel strips on a parchment-covered baking sheet until they are very firm.

Place the crispy rice cereal in a wide, shallow bowl. Once the caramel strips are firm, dip one strip in the tempered chocolate, and let the excess drip back into the chocolate bowl. Roll the dipped caramel in the cereal until it is completely coated, then place it back on the baking sheet. Repeat until all of the caramel strips are covered with crispy rice cereal, then refrigerate the candy bars for 30 minutes to set the chocolate.

Dip the candy bars in chocolate a second time, to cover the cereal layer, then let the chocolate set completely. Store Caramel Crunch Candy Bars in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a month, and let them come to room temperature before serving.



Toffee



Although the process of making toffee involves cooking a sugar syrup to high heat, just like many hard candy recipes, toffee has one thing most lollipops and hard candies don't have: butter. Gobs and gobs of beautiful, creamy butter. Although the high butter content can make cooking toffee a little tricky, it's more than worth the extra effort to be rewarded with rich, crunchy toffee, bursting with the toasty, caramelized flavors of cooked butter and sugar. These toffee recipes run the gamut from the ultra-traditional English Toffee to more adventurous flavors like Spicy Peanut Butter Toffee with chipotle chili powder.

* Troubleshooting Toffee *



When toffee separates, a layer of butter appears on top of the candy.

The butter separated out of my toffee.

Many toffee recipes contain a large amount of butter, and in the course of cooking the candy, it is not uncommon for the butter to separate from the rest of the toffee and appear as a slick, oily layer on top of the bubbling sugar.

There are several common causes of butter separation. If the candy is heated too quickly, the abrupt temperature shift can cause the butter to separate, so it is best to follow the recipe's temperature guidelines and heat the toffee gradually, especially in the beginning stages of melting the butter and the sugar. Another frequent culprit? Thin saucepans that don't conduct heat evenly and have "hot spots" where portions of the candy overheat.

If your toffee does separate during cooking, all is not lost. Briefly remove the pan from the heat and stir vigorously to bring the candy back together. If it doesn't come together, return the pan to the heat and add a spoonful of very hot water and stir until the butter is reincorporated. If you don't notice the separation until after the toffee has been poured out of the pan, it is unfortunately too late to fix the toffee, but it's still quite edible! Once it has set, wipe the butter off the top of the toffee and give it a try. If you find the texture a little hard, you can chop up the toffee to use as toffee bits in baking recipes.

My toffee is soft and sticky.

Soft, sticky toffee is caused by an excess of moisture in the candy. This can be a result of undercooking the candy, using a recipe with too much corn syrup or other liquid sweeteners, or making toffee on a humid day. Soft toffee cannot be saved, but in the future you can avoid the problem by making sure your thermometer is calibrated (see page 23), cooking the toffee to the prescribed temperature, and cooking toffee in a low-humidity environment.

English Toffee

Yield: 1 pound (454 g) plain toffee, or 2 pounds (908 g) chocolate-coated toffee; approximately twenty-four 1 x 2-inch (2.5 x 5-cm) toffee bars, each about 1 ounce (28 g) when coated in chocolate

These slender fingers of English Toffee have an understated elegance. The recipe doesn't call for nuts, flavoring, or any crazy mix-ins—even the chocolate is optional. The focus is on the pure flavors of butter and sugar, and once you taste this toffee, you'll understand why it doesn't need anything else.

2⅔ ounces or ⅓ cup (80 ml) water

1½ ounces or 2 tablespoons (42 g) light corn syrup

1 pound or 2 cups (454 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 pound 2⅔ ounces or 2⅔ cups (522.5 g) granulated sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1 pound (454 g) dark chocolate, melted and tempered (optional, see page 26)



Line a rimmed baking sheet with a nonstick silicone mat or aluminum foil sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

In a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan, combine the water, corn syrup, butter, granulated sugar, and salt. Place the pan over medium heat, and stir while the butter melts and the sugar dissolves. Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming, and bring the candy to a boil. Once boiling, insert a candy thermometer.

Continue to cook the candy, stirring frequently to prevent scorching, until it reaches 300°F (149°C).

Once at 300°F (149°C), pour the candy out onto the prepared baking sheet and spread it into a thin layer. Let it set for a few minutes, and then when it is no longer liquid but still pliable, use a knife or a pizza cutter to score the toffee into small 1 x 2-inch (2.5 x 5-cm) rectangles. Let the toffee cool completely at room temperature.

When the toffee is cool, carefully break it apart along the scored lines. You can serve it plain, or you can dip it partially or completely in melted, tempered chocolate. If you dip it in chocolate, you can decorate the top by touching the top with the tines of a dipping fork (see page 141) to give it a nice pattern. This toffee also pairs well with nuts, so consider sprinkling the toffee with your favorite toasted nuts to add a little more flavor and crunch.

Store English Toffee in an airtight container at cool room temperature for up to 2 weeks. In humid environments it might start to get soft and sticky within a week.

Hazelnut Toffee

Yield: 1 pound (454 g)

I am a one-woman hazelnut booster squad. Even though hazelnuts are not exactly a secret ingredient, I'm convinced that they're not nearly as popular as they should be, and I'm on a culinary crusade to raise hazelnut awareness. Hazelnuts to the people! Part of my plan involves featuring these nuts in a variety of candies, paired with different flavors. In this recipe, the sweet and nutty taste of hazelnuts mixes perfectly with spicy cinnamon and buttery toffee.

- 8 ounces or 1 cup (224 g) unsalted butter, cubed**
- 1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 ml) water**
- ¾ ounce or 1 tablespoon (21 g) light corn syrup**
- 7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 4 ounces or ¾ cup (112 g) toasted hazelnuts, coarsely chopped (see page 33)**

Line a rimmed baking sheet with a nonstick silicone mat or aluminum foil sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

Place the cubed butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat, and gently warm it until it is mostly melted. Once it is almost completely liquid, add the water, corn syrup, and granulated sugar. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush. Bring the candy to a boil, and insert a candy thermometer. Continue to cook the candy, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching, until it reaches 295°F (146°C) on the thermometer.

Once at 295°F (146°C), remove the pan from the heat and stir in the ground cinnamon until it is well incorporated. Add the hazelnuts, mix them in well, and scrape the toffee onto the prepared baking sheet. Smooth it into a thin, even layer and let it set at room temperature, for about an hour.

When the toffee is set, break or cut it into small pieces to serve. Store Hazelnut Toffee in an airtight container at cool room temperature for up to 2 weeks. In humid environments it might start to get soft and sticky within a week.





Almond Toffee

Yield: 1 pound 10 ounces (728 g)

If English Toffee is the genteel gentleman of the candy world, then Almond Toffee is like your crazy uncle: a little excessive sometimes, but so charming you can't help but smile. There is nothing restrained about this toffee—it is packed with whole toasted almonds during the cooking process, and then the finished toffee slab is smothered with chocolate and additional crushed almonds on both sides.

12½ ounces or 2½ cups (350 g) whole almonds, raw

8 ounces or 1 cup (224 g) unsalted butter, cubed

4 ounces or ½ cup (120 ml) warm water

7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon light corn syrup

8 ounces (224 g) dark chocolate, finely chopped

Preheat the oven to 350°F (176.7°C, or gas mark 4). Line a rimmed baking sheet with a nonstick silicone mat or aluminum foil. Spread the almonds on the baking sheet and toast for about 10 minutes, until they are fragrant and light golden brown. Let the almonds cool to room temperature, then take 1 cup (150 g) of toasted almonds and finely chop them by hand or in a food processor. (See page 33 for more information on toasting and chopping nuts.)

Line a rimmed baking sheet with a nonstick silicone mat or aluminum foil sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

Place the cubed butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat, and gently warm it until it is mostly melted. Once it is almost completely liquid, add the water, granulated sugar, salt, and corn syrup. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush. Bring the candy to a boil, and insert a candy thermometer. Continue to cook the candy, stirring occasionally, until it reaches 240°F (115°C) on the thermometer.

Add the remaining 1½ cups (200 g) of whole almonds to the toffee, and stir them in. The mixture might separate when you add the nuts, but continue to stir and heat the toffee gently, and it will come back together. Cook the candy, stirring constantly, until it reaches 295°F (146°C) on the candy thermometer. As it gets closer to the temperature the nuts will become fragrant and might start popping, and the toffee will be a deep golden brown color.

Pour the candy out onto the prepared baking sheet and smooth it into an even layer. Let it cool slightly at room temperature, for about 5 minutes, then sprinkle half of the chopped chocolate on top. Allow the chocolate to soften and melt from the heat of the toffee, then spread the melted chocolate into a thin, even layer. Sprinkle half of the crushed nuts on the wet chocolate and press down gently to adhere them.

Refrigerate the tray to set the chocolate, for about 20 minutes. Once set, flip the toffee over and peel off the foil backing. Melt the remaining chopped chocolate in the microwave, spread the melted chocolate on the toffee, and sprinkle the top with the remaining chopped nuts. Refrigerate the toffee again to set the chocolate, for about 20 minutes. Once set, break or chop the toffee into small pieces.

Store Almond Toffee in an airtight container at cool room temperature for up to 2 weeks. In humid environments it might start to get soft and sticky within a week.

Spicy Peanut Butter Toffee

Yield: 1 pound 10 ounces (728 g)



- 2²/₃ ounces or 1/3 cup (80 ml) water**
- 3²/₃ ounces or 1/3 cup (102 g) light corn syrup**
- 7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar**
- 9³/₄ ounces or 1 cup (273 g) crunchy peanut butter**
- 1/8 teaspoon baking soda**
- 1/4 teaspoon chipotle chile powder**
- 4³/₄ ounces or 1 cup (133 g) honey-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped**
- 6 ounces (168 g) milk chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)**

Spicy Peanut Butter Toffee has a light, aerated, crispy texture, similar to the filling of a popular peanut butter candy bar. To make the flavor more modern and exciting, I've added a little chipotle chile powder to the recipe, but if you're sensitive to spicy flavors, it can be omitted. For the best taste and texture, use regular peanut butter—not the “natural” variety—in this recipe.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with a nonstick silicone mat or aluminum foil sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

In a medium saucepan, combine the water, corn syrup, and granulated sugar over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then wipe down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. Bring the mixture to a boil, and insert a candy thermometer.

Cook the candy, stirring occasionally, until it reaches 305°F (152°C) on the thermometer. Once at the right temperature, remove the pan from the heat and stir in the peanut butter, baking soda, and chile powder. The baking soda will cause the mixture to bubble up and become very foamy. Once it bubbles up, add the chopped peanuts and stir them in as well.

Scrape the toffee onto the prepared baking sheet and smooth it into a thin, even layer. Let the toffee set at room temperature, for about 45 minutes. Once set, spread the top of the toffee with the tempered milk chocolate and allow the chocolate to set. Break or chop the toffee into small pieces to serve it.

Wrap Spicy Peanut Butter Toffee in plastic wrap and store it in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

VARIATION: If you want to turn this toffee into a crispy peanut butter candy bar, pour the toffee into a 9 x 9-inch (23 x 23-cm) pan lined with foil to produce a thicker filling. While it is still warm, run a knife through it to score it into small bars. Once cool, carefully cut the bars along the scored lines and dip them in tempered chocolate.

Cashew Toffee Bars

Yield: Approximately 27 small (1 x 3-inch, or 2.5 x 7.5-cm) bars

Unlike many other toffee recipes, these Cashew Toffee Bars are made entirely from brown sugar, without a speck of granulated sugar in the recipe. The result is a crispy, crumbly toffee with a deep molasses flavor that is offset by big chunks of salty cashews. The toffee is cut into thin fingers and dipped in chocolate, then rolled in more crushed cashews, so the bars have a nice balance of different flavors and textures.



8 ounces (224 g) unsalted butter, cubed

11¼ ounces or 1½ cups (315 g) packed light brown sugar

1 tablespoon light corn syrup

½ teaspoon salt

15 ounces or 3 cups (420 g) toasted, salted cashews, coarsely chopped (see page 33)

12 ounces (336 g) dark chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

Line a 9 x 9-inch (23 x 23-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

Place the cubed butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat, and gently warm it until it is mostly melted. Once it is almost completely liquid, add the brown sugar, corn syrup, and salt. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush. The butter may separate out at first, but continue stirring and it will come together.

Bring the candy to a boil, and insert a candy thermometer. Continue to cook the candy, stirring frequently to prevent scorching, until it reaches 295°F (146°C) on the thermometer.

Once at 295°F (146°C), remove the pan from the heat and stir in 1 cup (140 g) of the chopped cashews. Pour the toffee into the prepared pan. Let it cool for about 5 minutes, then when it is still pliable but no longer liquid, use a knife to score it into small bars about 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide and 3 inches (7.5 cm) long.

Let the toffee set completely at room temperature. While you wait for it to set, finely chop the remaining 2 cups (280 g) of cashews and place them in a wide, shallow bowl. Once the toffee is cool and firm, carefully cut it along the scored lines and trim any jagged edges.

Dip a toffee bar in the melted chocolate, then roll it in the crushed nuts until it is completely coated on all sides. Repeat until all of the toffee bars have been covered in chocolate and nuts. Refrigerate the bars to set the chocolate, about 15 minutes.

Store Cashew Toffee Bars in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks, and bring them to room temperature before serving.

Fudge



Traditional fudge, or what I term “old-fashioned fudge,” is actually a close relative of fondant. It shares the same cooking process and theory: a sugar syrup is boiled, then cooled to a specific temperature, then beaten just until it starts to crystallize. When done properly, this type of fudge has a texture that cannot be imitated; firm, creamy, and smooth, it’s an absolute pleasure to taste. But old-fashioned fudge isn’t the only game in town. “No-fail” fudge recipes have become more popular. These shortcut fudges use chocolate and marshmallows to help the fudge set and give it a smooth texture, eliminating the need for long periods of cooling and beating.

Some people believe old-fashioned fudge is the only legitimate type of fudge, and consider the marshmallow-based fudges to be poor imposters. My view? There’s not always time to go through the extended boiling, cooling, and beating process of old-fashioned fudge. I’m an equal-opportunity fudge fanatic, and I recognize that sometimes folks just need a quick and easy fudge recipe, even if it strays from traditional fudge. So this chapter includes a number of fast, simple fudge recipes for instant gratification, as well as traditional fudge recipes that would make Grandma proud.

* Troubleshooting Fudge *

My old-fashioned fudge is grainy.

A gritty texture is one of the most common complaints when making old-fashioned fudge. Unfortunately, fudge has a tendency to develop sugar crystals extremely easily. Always pay close attention to the recipe, and avoid stirring or agitating the fudge whenever you are not explicitly instructed to do so. It is especially important to let the fudge rest, undisturbed, during the cooling process, and to let it cool all the way to the specified temperature before stirring. Stirring the fudge when it should be cooling, or even vigorously jostling the pan, is a recipe for crystallization. And that’s one candy recipe no one wants!

My old-fashioned fudge is too hard or too soft.

The texture of the fudge is a result of two factors: the cooking temperature, and the amount of stirring it receives. Cooking the fudge even two or three degrees higher or lower than the temperature specified can be the difference between a successful candy and a soupy mess or a rock-hard slab of sugar. Make sure your thermometer is properly calibrated (see page 23) and watch the cooking fudge carefully, so as not to over- or undercook it.

Likewise, there is a fine line between stirring the fudge too much and stirring it too little. If you don’t stir enough, the fudge will never set and will have a soft texture more like that of a caramel. If you stir too much, the fudge will harden and set before it can be scraped into the proper pan. It will still taste good, but it’s pretty much impossible to cut solidified fudge from a saucepan into beautiful, even squares. The best way to learn when fudge is done is simply to practice, but a good rule of thumb is to watch for it to change from shiny to matte, then immediately scrape it into the pan before it starts to set.

Better Than Grandma's Chocolate Nut Fudge

Yield: 1 pound 10 ounces (740 g)

I don't mean to pick a fight with anyone's grandmother, but I will defend this fudge's superior taste against any and all challengers. This old-fashioned fudge is firm yet creamy, with a deep chocolate taste from unsweetened chocolate, a caramelized dairy flavor from sweetened condensed milk, and plenty of toasted nuts.

8 ounces or 1 cup (235 ml) water

**14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g)
granulated sugar**

2 tablespoons light corn syrup

½ teaspoon salt

**11 ounces or 1 cup (308 g) sweetened
condensed milk**

**4 ounces (112 g) unsweetened
chocolate, finely chopped**

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

**1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 g)
unsalted butter, cubed**

**4 ounces or 1 cup (112 g) toasted
pecans or walnuts, coarsely
chopped (see page 33)**

Line an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

In a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan, combine the water, granulated sugar, corn syrup, and salt, and place the pan over medium heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then wipe down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. Bring the syrup to a rolling boil, then stir in the sweetened condensed milk.

After adding the milk, bring the mixture back to a boil, then insert a candy thermometer. Continue to cook the fudge, without stirring, until it reaches 238°F (114°C).

Once at 238°F (114°C), remove the pan from the heat. Sprinkle the chopped chocolate, vanilla extract, and cubed butter on top of the fudge in the pan, but **do not stir it in!** Just let everything sit on top of the fudge. If you stir right away, you will form sugar crystals that will make your fudge grainy. Instead, let the fudge cool to 120°F (49°C) without disturbing the pan.

When the fudge reaches 120°F (49°C), remove the candy thermometer. Begin to stir the fudge vigorously with a wooden spoon. At first it will be thick and glossy, with a layer of butter on top. But as you continue to stir, the butter will become incorporated and the fudge will become less shiny. After 5 to 10 minutes of stirring it will take on the matte look of chocolate frosting. At this point, the fudge is about to set, so quickly add the chopped nuts and stir them into the fudge. Scrape the fudge into the prepared pan and quickly smooth it into an even layer.

Allow the fudge to set at room temperature, for about 45 minutes. Once set and firm, remove it from the pan and cut the fudge into small 1-inch (2.5-cm) squares to serve. Wrap this fudge well in plastic wrap, and store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a month. Bring it to room temperature before serving.

Alternative method: If you want to save your arm muscles, you can use a stand mixer to beat the fudge instead. After it has reached 238°F (114°C), pour the fudge into a large mixing bowl, but do not scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl when you pour. Add the chocolate, butter, and vanilla on top without stirring, and let the fudge cool to 120°F (49°C) as described above. Once it has reached 120°F (49°C), begin to beat the fudge on medium-low speed with a paddle attachment. It will take about 5 minutes in the mixer for the fudge to reach the thick, matte texture that signals it is finished.



Red Velvet Fudge

Yield: 2 pounds 6 ounces (1064 g)

You've heard of red velvet cake, but red velvet fudge? It's so crazy it just might work! The taste of this old-fashioned fudge does bear a strong resemblance to actual red velvet cake. It has a soft, melting texture, and a light cocoa flavor that isn't too sweet thanks to the buttermilk and unsweetened cocoa powder in the recipe.

I will be the first to admit the cream cheese topping is completely unnecessary—the fudge is decadent enough without any adornments. However, adding a layer of sweet cream cheese frosting is the “icing on the cake” as it were, and I simply could not resist.

FOR FUDGE:

- 1 pound or 2 cups (470 ml) buttermilk
- 1⅓ ounces or ⅓ cup (37 g) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2¾ ounces or ¼ cup (77 g) light corn syrup
- 31½ ounces or 4½ cups (882 g) granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 4 ounces or 8 tablespoons (112 g) unsalted butter, cubed
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons red gel food coloring

FOR CREAM CHEESE TOPPING:

- 1½ ounces or 3 tablespoons (42 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 ounces (56 g) cream cheese, at room temperature
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 8 ounces or 2 cups (224 g) powdered sugar, sifted
- Pinch of salt
- Red sprinkles, for decorating (optional)

Line an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

To make the fudge: In a saucepan that holds at least 6 quarts (5.4L), combine the buttermilk, cocoa powder, corn syrup, granulated sugar, salt, and baking soda. Place the pan over medium heat, and whisk everything together until it is combined and there are no lumps of cocoa powder remaining. Continue to stir until all of the sugar is dissolved and the mixture comes to a full boil. It will bubble up a great deal as it cooks.

Wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming, and insert a candy thermometer. Boil the candy over medium heat, without stirring, until it reaches 240°F (115°C) on the candy thermometer.

Once at 240°F (115°C), remove the pan from the heat and place the cubed butter, vanilla, and red food coloring on top of the fudge in the pan, but **do not stir it in!** Just let everything sit on top of the fudge. If you stir right away, you will be forming sugar crystals that will make your fudge grainy. Instead, let the fudge cool to 115°F (46°C) without disturbing the pan.

When the fudge reaches 115°F (46°C), remove the candy thermometer. Begin to stir the fudge vigorously with a wooden spoon. At first it will be thick and glossy, with a layer of butter on top. But as you continue to stir, the butter will become incorporated and the fudge will become less shiny. After 15 to 20 minutes of stirring it will take on the matte look of frosting. At this point, the fudge is about to set, so quickly scrape the fudge into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer.

To make the cream cheese topping: In a mixing bowl, combine the softened butter, cream cheese, and vanilla. Beat on medium speed until the mixture is light and there are no lumps of butter or cream cheese. Add the sifted powdered sugar and pinch of salt, and mix on low speed until the powdered sugar is incorporated. Scrape down the bottom and sides of the bowl, then turn the mixer to medium speed and beat until the topping has a light, fluffy texture.

Scrape the topping onto the red velvet fudge, and smooth it into an even layer. If desired, top the fudge with red sprinkles or red sugar crystals. Refrigerate the fudge to set the topping, for 1 hour. Once set and firm, remove the fudge from the pan and peel off the foil backing. Cut the fudge into small 1-inch (2.5-cm) squares to serve. Store Red Velvet Fudge in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Bring it to room temperature before serving.



Alternative method: A mixer can be used to beat the fudge instead of doing this step by hand. After it has reached 240°F (116°C), pour the fudge into a large mixing bowl, but do not scrape the bottom and sides of the saucepan when you pour. Add the butter, vanilla, and red food coloring on top without stirring, and let the fudge cool to 115°F (46°C) as described above. Once it has reached 115°F (46°C), begin to beat the fudge on medium-low speed with a paddle attachment. It will take about 10 to 12 minutes in the mixer for the fudge to reach the thick, matte texture that signals it is finished.

Vanilla-Honey Fudge

Yield: 2 pounds 8 ounces (1120 g)

Vanilla and honey are usually supporting players in the candy world, but their delicate flavors take center stage in this white chocolate fudge recipe. Crème fraîche, a cousin of sour cream, adds a slight tang and keeps the sweet fudge from turning cloying.



- 2 vanilla beans**
- 4 ounces (112 g) unsalted butter, cubed**
- 6 ounces or ¾ cup (180 g) crème fraîche, not “light” variety (see Note at right)**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 6 ounces or ½ cup (168 g) honey**
- 10½ ounces or 1½ cups (294 g) granulated sugar**
- 12 ounces (336 g) white chocolate, chopped, or white chocolate chips**
- 7 ounces or 1¾ cups (196 g) marshmallow creme**

Line an 9 x 9-inch (23 x 23-cm) pan with foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

Split the vanilla beans lengthwise and scrape out the seeds. Set them aside for now.

In a medium saucepan, combine the butter, crème fraîche, salt, honey, and granulated sugar over medium heat. Stir until the butter melts and the sugar dissolves, then wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming.

When the candy comes to a boil, insert a candy thermometer. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the candy reaches 240°F (116°C) on the thermometer.

Once at 240°F (116°C), remove the pan from the heat and add the chopped white chocolate, the marshmallow creme, and the seeds from the vanilla beans. Stir until the white chocolate melts and the fudge is completely smooth.

Pour the fudge into the prepared pan. Let the fudge cool and set at room temperature overnight, or in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours. When set, remove the fudge and peel off the foil backing. Use a large sharp knife to cut the fudge into 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces to serve. Wrap the fudge well and store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. This is a soft fudge, so keep it in the refrigerator until serving time.

NOTE: Crème fraîche is a thick French cream similar to sour cream, but with a less tart flavor. It is especially nice for cooking because it gives a rich, full taste but does not curdle when heated (assuming you do not use the “light” variety). If you cannot find crème fraîche at your local grocery store, an equal amount of sour cream can be substituted, but be aware that the flavor will be a bit more assertive.

Peanut Butter Cup Fudge

Yield: 3 pounds (1360 g)

Salty and sweet flavors collide in Peanut Butter Cup Fudge. The peanut butter fudge base is smooth and creamy, and the handfuls of miniature peanut butter cups studded throughout the fudge add a sweet touch along with an extra dose of peanut flavor. If you cannot find miniature peanut butter cups, chop up larger peanut butter cups to use instead.

6 ounces or 12 tablespoons (168 g) unsalted butter, cubed

5¼ ounces or ⅔ cup (147 g) evaporated whole milk

21 ounces or 3 cups (588 g) granulated sugar

¾ teaspoon salt

9¼ ounces or 1 cup (273 g) smooth peanut butter

7 ounces or 2⅓ cups (196 g) marshmallow creme

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) miniature peanut butter cups

Line a 9 x 9-inch (23 x 23-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

Place the cubed butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat, and gently warm it until it is mostly melted. Once it is almost completely liquid, add the evaporated milk, granulated sugar, and salt, and stir until the sugar dissolves. Wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. Bring the mixture to a boil, and once boiling, insert a candy thermometer.

Continue to cook the candy, stirring occasionally, until it reaches 236°F (113°C) on the thermometer.

Once at 236°F (113°C), remove the pan from the heat and add the peanut butter, marshmallow creme, and vanilla. Stir until the peanut butter and marshmallow creme are incorporated and everything is completely smooth.

Pour approximately half of the fudge into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer. Working quickly, sprinkle half of the miniature peanut butter cups on top of the fudge in the pan. Pour the remaining fudge into the pan, covering the peanut butter cups, and smooth it into an even layer. Sprinkle the rest of the candies on top of the fudge. Once they come into contact with the hot fudge they will start to melt, so try not to disturb them after you've sprinkled them on, otherwise the chocolate will smear.

Let the fudge cool and set at room temperature overnight, or in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours. When set, remove the fudge and peel off the foil backing. Use a large sharp knife to cut the fudge into 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces to serve. Wrap the fudge well and store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. For the best taste and texture, bring it to room temperature before serving.



Grasshopper Fudge

Yield: 2 pounds 4 ounces (1134 g)

No grasshoppers were harmed in the making of this fudge! Rather, chocolate-mint cookies are the not-so-secret ingredient in this refreshingly minty chocolate fudge. The cookies add an extra boost of mint flavor and a fun crunchy texture. If you cannot find chocolate-mint cookies, any chocolate wafer or chocolate sandwich cookie can be substituted instead.

6 ounces or ¾ cup (168 g) fat-free evaporated milk

15¾ ounces or 2¼ cups (441 g) granulated sugar

½ teaspoon salt

10 ounces (280 g) dark chocolate, chopped

4 ounces or 8 tablespoons (112 g) unsalted butter, cubed, at room temperature

1 teaspoon peppermint extract

3½ ounces or 1 cup (98 g) chocolate-mint cookies, coarsely chopped

Line an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

Place the evaporated milk, granulated sugar, and salt in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, and stir until the sugar dissolves. Wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. Bring the mixture to a boil, and once boiling, insert a candy thermometer. Continue to cook the candy, stirring continuously, until it reaches 230°F (110°C) on the thermometer.

Once at 230°F (110°C), remove the pan from the heat and add the chocolate, cubed butter, and peppermint extract. Stir until the chocolate and butter melt. Don't worry if the fudge looks broken at this point. Scrape it into a mixing bowl and beat it on low speed for 5 minutes until thick and smooth. Add three-fourths of the chopped cookie pieces and stir them into the fudge.

Scrape the fudge into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer. Sprinkle the top of the fudge with the remaining one-fourth chopped cookie pieces. Let the fudge cool and set at room temperature overnight, or in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours. When set, remove the fudge and peel off the foil backing. Use a large sharp knife to cut the fudge into 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces to serve. Wrap the fudge well and store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a month. For the best taste and texture, bring it to room temperature before serving.



Candy Bar Fudge

Yield: 3 pounds 8 ounces (1568 g)

Restraint? Moderation? Self-control? Never heard of 'em. This fudge celebrates the joy of excess, by combining all of my favorite candy bar flavors and textures into one behemoth slab of fudge. The base is an easy chocolate-peanut butter fudge flecked with crispy rice cereal. This is topped with a salted peanut-caramel layer, which is itself finished with a shiny chocolate-peanut butter glaze. It's ridiculous. It's unnecessary. It's my dream fudge, and I have no regrets.



- 24 ounces (672 g) dark chocolate, chopped, divided**
- 14 ounces (392 g) sweetened condensed milk**
- 2 ounces or 4 tablespoons (56 g) unsalted butter**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 4½ ounces or ¼ cup plus 3 tablespoons (126 g) peanut butter, divided**
- 1 ounce or 1 cup (28 g) crispy rice cereal**
- 14 ounces (392 g) soft caramels, store-bought or homemade (I recommend Sea Salt Caramels, page 66)**
- 7½ ounces or 1½ cups (210 g) toasted, salted peanuts, coarsely chopped (see page 33)**
- 1½ tablespoons corn syrup**
- 3 tablespoons (45 ml) heavy cream, at room temperature**

Line a 9 x 9-inch (23 x 23-cm) pan with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large microwave-safe bowl, combine 18 ounces of the chopped dark chocolate, the sweetened condensed milk, the butter, the salt, and 2½ ounces or ¼ cup (70 g) of the peanut butter. Microwave for 1 minute, then stir. If there are still chunks of chocolate remaining, microwave in 20-second intervals, stirring after every 20 seconds, until the fudge is smooth. Stir in the crispy rice cereal, and scrape the fudge into the prepared pan. Smooth it into an even layer. Refrigerate the fudge for 30 minutes.

To make the nutty caramel layer, place the unwrapped caramels in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave them in 30-second intervals until they are melted and smooth. Add the chopped peanuts and stir everything together until the peanuts are coated with caramel. Pour the caramel onto the fudge layer and spread it evenly. Refrigerate the fudge for 20 minutes.

To make the chocolate-peanut glaze, combine the remaining 6 ounces (168 g) chocolate, the remaining 2 ounces or 3 tablespoons (56 g) peanut butter, and the corn syrup in a small microwave-safe bowl. Microwave for 30 seconds, then stir everything together. Continue to microwave in 30-second intervals until the chocolate is melted and smooth. Add the room temperature cream and whisk until your glaze is smooth and shiny.

Pour the glaze over the top of the nutty caramel and spread it into a smooth, even layer. Refrigerate the pan to set the fudge, for at least 45 minutes. When set, remove the fudge and peel off the foil backing. Use a large sharp knife to cut the fudge into 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces to serve. Wrap the fudge well and store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. The crispy rice cereal gets soft after this time, but if you omit the cereal the fudge can be easily kept for at least 3 weeks. For the best taste and texture, bring it to room temperature before serving.

Truffles



Truffles are the best con game around. They have a gourmet, elegant, expensive reputation, but in reality they are one of the easiest, most accessible candies to make. The simplest truffle recipes literally have two ingredients, and even the more complex varieties are built on the same basic steps: heat cream. Mix it into chocolate. Stir for a bit, and presto: truffles are born.

The simplicity of the basic truffle recipe means they're the perfect vehicle for experimentation. While this chapter does include a classic chocolate truffle recipe, most of the other truffles are more adventurous, drawing their inspiration from ice cream flavors, popular drinks, and the backyard garden. I hope you'll be inspired by some of these flavor combinations and use these truffle recipes as a jumping-off point to create your own fun flavors.

Troubleshooting Truffles

My ganache has broken.

Ganache is temperamental, and it can separate as a result of abrupt temperature shifts, overheated chocolate, or the whim of the chocolate gods. Fortunately, it is also fairly easy to repair a broken ganache. If your broken ganache is cool, gently warm the ganache in the microwave or over a water bath. The goal is to get it warm and fluid, not hot, so microwave it in 10-second intervals or keep it on the water bath for 30-second intervals at a time, and whisk between each heating session, until it reaches about 100°F (38°C). Often, reheating the ganache is enough to bring it back together. If this doesn't work, add a teaspoon of room temperature milk to the ganache and continue whisking until it comes together.

If your broken ganache is warm, try whisking it continuously. Often this will make the ganache look worse at first, but after a minute or two of mixing, it will frequently come back together. If it has not come together after several minutes, add a spoonful of room temperature milk and continue whisking until it is no longer broken.

The chocolate coating on my dipped truffles has cracked.

Most of the recipes in this book suggest letting the formed truffles sit overnight in a cool room (63° to 68°F, or 17° to 20°C) before dipping them. This overnight curing period allows the ganache to become firm and dry and form a slight "skin," which makes it easier to dip them at room temperature. Dipping cold truffles in warm chocolate often causes the chocolate to crack, or brings the dipping chocolate out of temper, which is why dipping room temperature truffles is so ideal.

Unfortunately, an overnight truffle curing period is not always feasible given time or weather constraints, so one alternative is to chill the truffles just until they are firm, but not rock-hard or ice-cold. If your chocolate develops cracks, it can sometimes be disguised by a coating of nuts or other embellishments, or a second dip in chocolate once the truffles are at room temperature.

**A****B****C****D****E****F**

- A.** Bring the cream to a boil in a small saucepan.
- B.** Pour the hot cream over the chopped chocolate.
- C.** After 1 minute, whisk the cream and chocolate together.
- D.** Stir until the mixture is completely smooth.
- E.** Add the room temperature butter.
- F.** Whisk the butter into the ganache until it is smooth and shiny.

* How to Make Ganache *

The backbone of most truffle recipes is a mixture of chocolate and cream known as ganache. Because truffles are so simple, particular attention should be paid to the quality and selection of the ingredients for the ganache.

The cream you use should be heavy cream—light cream does not contain enough fat, and the taste and texture of the truffles will suffer. Truffles derive most of their flavor from the type of chocolate you use, so always use the best chocolate you can find, and select one whose taste you enjoy on its own. White, milk, and dark chocolates each have different amounts of cocoa solids and should not be used interchangeably in these recipes.

My truffle recipes all include a little corn syrup. It can technically be omitted if you prefer not to cook with corn syrup, but I find even a small amount gives it a smoother, more pleasant texture and adds a touch of sweetness, which is nice when working with dark chocolates. Finally, I like to add a small amount of butter to the finished ganache. Butter gives the truffles a luxurious, melting texture, and makes them taste extra rich.

Each truffle recipe is slightly different, but the basic procedure for making truffles starts with heating the cream. Bring the cream to a boil in a small saucepan. Don't let it continue to boil, or you will cook off too much water and risk breaking your ganache. Place the chopped chocolate in a heat-safe bowl, and pour the hot cream over the chopped chocolate. Let the cream sit and soften the chocolate for 1 minute.

After 1 minute, whisk the cream and chocolate together. Stir until the chocolate has melted and the mixture is completely smooth. Add the room temperature butter, and whisk the butter into the ganache until it is smooth and shiny. Cover the ganache with plastic wrap, and let it cool at room temperature. Once at room temperature, refrigerate the ganache until it is firm enough to scoop.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN GANACHE “BREAKS”?

Ganache is an emulsion, meaning it is a delicate suspension of fat particles and water. When ganache is properly made it is shiny and smooth, with a thick, puddinglike texture. If the fat separates from the water, the ganache is considered “broken” and will have a grainy, lumpy appearance with a layer of butter resting on top of the chocolate. While broken ganache is technically edible, it’s not very appetizing to look at, the texture is unpleasant, and it is difficult to work with. See page 87 for tips on how to salvage broken ganache.



An example of broken ganache on the left, and properly emulsified ganache on the right.



A



B

ROUND TRUFFLES

A. Scoop the truffle into small balls onto a piece of parchment.

B. Roll the truffles between your palms to make them round.

* How to Form and Finish Your Truffles *

Although truffles originally got their name from their resemblance to the round fungus, they have moved far beyond the basic cocoa powder–dusted ball we’re all familiar with. Modern truffles come in a variety of shapes and sizes, from simple chocolate-coated spheres to square truffles to intricately molded pieces of edible art. The recipes in this chapter provide guidelines for how to form and finish your truffles, but they are merely suggestions—let your creativity guide you!

One word of warning: not all ganache recipes are created equal. A ganache designed to fill molded chocolates is typically much looser than the ganache used for round and square truffles. If you want to adapt a regular truffle recipe to use in a molded chocolate, try adding 25 percent more cream to the ganache, to give it a softer, more melting texture. Likewise, you cannot simply roll and dip ganache meant for molding—it will be too soft. If you’d like to adapt a molded ganache recipe, reduce the liquid by about 20 percent to get a ganache that is firm enough to withstand hand-rolling and dipping.

... ROUND TRUFFLES ...

When it comes to dipping round truffles, you have two options: dipping them by hand, or using dipping tools. Dipping by hand is typically faster and gives the candies a charming old-fashioned appearance, with irregular swirls of chocolate on top. The chocolate coating is often a little thinner on hand-dipped chocolates, which makes it a great method to use if you want to coat your dipped chocolates in cocoa or nuts. If your truffles will be left plain, you might prefer to use dipping tools to get a smooth, even finish. For ideas for decorating your finished truffles, see page 141.

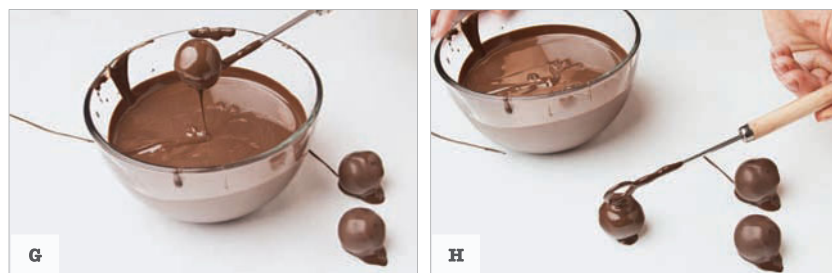
How to Form Round Truffles

Make sure your chilled ganache is firm enough to hold its shape, but not rock-hard. Use a candy scoop to form small balls of ganache and place them on a sheet of parchment paper. Using a scoop helps ensure each truffle is the same size, but if you don’t have a candy scoop you can use a regular spoon.



HAND-DIP ROUND TRUFFLES

- C.** Fill your palm with chocolate, and roll a truffle around in the chocolate until coated.
- D.** If leaving the truffles plain, roll the truffle from your palm onto a sheet of parchment paper.
- E.** If coating the truffles, roll the truffle from your palm into a bowl of cocoa powder or your coating of choice.
- F.** Carefully remove the truffle from the bowl to let the chocolate set completely.



ROUND TRUFFLES WITH DIPPING TOOLS

- G.** Submerge a truffle completely in chocolate, then pull it out, letting the excess drip back into the bowl.
- H.** Flip the truffle onto a sheet of parchment.

Dust your hands with a light layer of cocoa powder, and roll the truffles between your palms to get them round. Use a light touch with the cocoa—it is not intended to coat the truffles, it is simply meant to prevent the ganache from sticking to your hands. If possible, let the truffles sit out overnight in a cool room to dry and set the ganache.

How to Hand-Dip Round Truffles

Fill your palm with a spoonful of tempered chocolate. Roll a truffle around your palm until it is coated with chocolate on all sides. If you want to leave your hand-dipped truffles plain, tilt your hand down and let the truffle roll from your palm, down your fingers, onto a sheet of parchment. This action removes excess chocolate and gives the truffle a decorative swirl on top.

If you will be rolling the truffles in cocoa powder, powdered sugar, chopped nuts, or other coatings, roll the chocolate-covered truffle from your palm into the bowl of coating material. Use dipping tools or a fork to turn the truffle and make sure it is completely coated. Let the truffle set for a few moments, then remove it from the bowl and place it on a sheet of parchment to set completely.

How to Dip Round Truffles with Dipping Tools

When it comes to dipping truffles, you have your choice of tools. Most sets come with a round or spiral dipper, and a fork-like dipper with two or three tines. You can use whichever tool you feel most comfortable with, but if you're just starting out you might find the round dipper is easiest for dipping round truffles. If you don't own dipping tools, you can use a regular fork instead.

Begin by submerging a truffle completely in tempered chocolate. Lift it out of the chocolate, letting the excess drip back into the bowl. Tap the dipping tool against the lip of the bowl to help remove excess chocolate. Flip the truffle upside down onto a sheet of parchment, so that the round dipping tool ends up on top. Repeat until all of the truffles are dipped.



A



B



C

FORMING SQUARE TRUFFLES

- A.** Line a square pan with plastic wrap, and pour ganache into the pan. Let it set completely.
- B.** Remove the ganache from the pan and spread melted chocolate in a thin layer on top.
- C.** Once the chocolate has set, cut the block of ganache into small squares.



D



E



F

DIPPING SQUARE TRUFFLES

- D.** Submerge a truffle completely in tempered chocolate.
- E.** Gently scrape the bottom of the truffle against the lip of the bowl.
- F.** Set the truffle onto a sheet of parchment at an angle.

.... SQUARE TRUFFLES

You don't have to limit yourself to round truffles. Square truffles are chic and modern, and their flat, expansive tops make them a joy to decorate. Any of the round truffles in this chapter can also be used to make square truffles. To really make your square truffles shine, see page 145 for instructions on how to decorate them with chocolate transfer sheets.

How to Form Square Truffles

Spray a square pan with nonstick spray, then press a sheet of plastic wrap into the pan, smoothing out any wrinkles. After the ganache is blended, pour the still-warm ganache into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer. Once it comes to room temperature, place it in the refrigerator to set completely. After the ganache is set, remove it from the pan. Spread a thin layer of melted chocolate on top of the ganache to form the "foot"—a chocolate layer on the bottom of each truffle that makes them easier to dip.

Let the chocolate set completely, then flip the block of ganache upside down so that the foot is on the bottom. Use a large sharp knife to cut the ganache into small squares. If possible, let the truffles sit out overnight to dry and set the ganache.

How to Dip Square Truffles

When dipping square truffles, dipping tools with tines, rather than round tools, should be your weapons of choice. In the absence of legitimate dipping tools, an actual fork can be used with good results. To dip square truffles, begin by submerging a truffle completely in tempered chocolate. Lift it out of the chocolate, letting the excess drip back into the bowl. Gently scrape the bottom of the truffle against the lip of the bowl to remove extra chocolate. Lower the truffle onto a sheet of parchment paper at a slight angle, then slide the tines of the dipping fork out from underneath the truffle.

Classic Chocolate Truffles

Yield: 48 truffles

These are the truffles everyone thinks of when they picture chocolate truffles—rich, smooth, and creamy, with a deep chocolate taste and a dusting of cocoa powder on the outside. I think they're just about perfect in their simplicity, but if you crave more variety, this recipe is also a great jumping-off point for experimentation. Add your favorite chopped nuts, dried fruit, or coconut, or experiment with adding flavoring oils.

10 ounces (280 g) dark chocolate, finely chopped

8 ounces or 1 cup (235 ml) heavy cream

¾ ounce or 1 tablespoon (21 g) light corn syrup

1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

2 ounces or ½ cup (56 g) unsweetened cocoa powder, plus more for dusting

1 pound (454 g) chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26), for dipping

Place the chopped dark chocolate in a medium bowl. In a small saucepan, combine the heavy cream and the corn syrup and stir them together over medium heat. Bring the cream to a boil, and once it is boiling, immediately pour it over the chopped chocolate in the bowl.

Let the hot cream soften the chocolate for 1 minute, then gently whisk them together. Do not whisk vigorously, or you will incorporate too much air into the ganache. Whisk until all of the chocolate is melted and your ganache is smooth and shiny. Add the room temperature butter and whisk it into the ganache until incorporated. Press a layer of plastic wrap directly on top of the ganache and let it sit until it reaches room temperature.

Once at room temperature, refrigerate the ganache until it is firm enough to scoop into balls, about 2 hours. Use a small 1-inch (2.5-cm) candy scoop to form balls of ganache and place them on a sheet of parchment, as described on page 89. Dust your hands with a light layer of cocoa powder and roll the balls between your palms to get them perfectly round. Let the truffles sit at cool room temperature overnight to dry and set the ganache.

Hand-dip the truffles in the tempered chocolate as described on page 90, and while the chocolate is still wet, roll the truffles in the 2 ounces (56 g) cocoa powder. Store Classic Chocolate Truffles in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and bring them to room temperature before serving.



Mint Chocolate Chip Truffles

Yield: 36 small truffles

Mint chocolate chip is my favorite ice cream flavor, so it seemed only natural to recreate this classic combination in truffle form. Miniature chocolate chips add a pleasant crunch and a semisweet flavor to the cooling, minty white chocolate ganache that forms the base of these truffles. They may not be ice cream, but I'd argue that these candies are just as refreshing on a hot summer's day.

2⅔ ounces or ⅓ cup (80 ml) heavy cream

12 ounces (336 g) white chocolate, finely chopped

⅛ teaspoon salt

2 ounces or 4 tablespoons (56 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 or 2 drops green food coloring

½ to 1 teaspoon peppermint extract

3½ ounces or ½ cup (98 g) miniature chocolate chips

Powdered sugar, for dusting

1 pound (454 g) chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26), for dipping

2 ounces (56 g) green candy coating or white chocolate tinted green, for decoration (optional)

Place the cream in a small saucepan over medium heat, and bring it just to a boil.

Once boiling, remove the pan from the heat and add the white chocolate to the saucepan, along with the salt. Whisk until the heat from the pan and cream melt the

chocolate. The mixture will be very thick. Add the room temperature butter and whisk until the ganache loosens up and is smooth and shiny. Whisk in the green food coloring a drop at a time until you get a light mint color you like.

Add ½ teaspoon of the peppermint extract to the ganache, and taste it to see if the mint flavor is strong enough. Different brands of extract can vary greatly in strength, so it's best to start flavoring conservatively. If you desire a stronger mint flavor, add up to a ½ teaspoon more of the peppermint extract and whisk it in. Pour the ganache into a medium bowl, press a layer of plastic wrap on top of the ganache, and let it cool completely to room temperature.

Once at room temperature, stir in the miniature chocolate chips and refrigerate the ganache until it is firm enough to scoop and roll, about 2 hours. Use a small 1-inch (2.5-cm) candy scoop to form balls of ganache and place them on a sheet of parchment, as described on page 89. Dust your hands with a light layer of powdered sugar and roll the balls between your palms to get them perfectly round. Let the truffles sit at cool room temperature overnight to dry and set the ganache.

Using dipping tools, dip the truffles in the tempered chocolate as described on page 90. Once all of the truffles are dipped, melt the green candy coating or green-tinted white chocolate and drizzle it over the truffles in random swirls, using the technique described on page 141. Let the chocolate set completely. Store Mint Chocolate Chip Truffles in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and let them come to room temperature completely before serving.



Crunchy Hazelnut Truffles

Yield: 20 truffles

If you're a fan of chocolate-hazelnut spread, you will love these truffles. They might be stretching the definition of "truffles" a bit, because there is no ganache to be seen in this recipe, but it's hard to argue with the convenience of mixing crushed cookies into premade chocolate spread! The resulting candies, with their blend of whole and chopped hazelnuts, creamy filling, and crunchy wafer cookies, speak for themselves.

6 ounces or 1¼ cups (168 g) toasted hazelnuts (see page 33)

5 ounces (140 g) chocolate creme-filled wafer cookies

7 ounces or ⅔ cup (196 g) chocolate-hazelnut spread

1 pound (454 g) chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26), for dipping

Finely chop ¾ cup (126 g) of the hazelnuts, leaving the remaining ½ cup (42 g) whole (you'll need about 20 whole nuts).

Place the wafer cookies in the bowl of a food processor and pulse them until they are coarsely chopped. Alternately, you can put them in a large zip-top plastic bag and crush them with a rolling pin until the cookies are in small pieces, but are not crushed to dust.

Pour the wafer cookies into a bowl and stir in the chocolate-hazelnut spread. Press a layer of plastic wrap on top of the mixture and refrigerate until it is firm enough to scoop, about 2 hours.

Use a small 1-inch (2.5-cm) scoop to form a ball of candy. Press a whole hazelnut into the center of the ball, and roll it between your palms to get it round. Repeat until all of the candy is formed into balls with hazelnuts in the center. Roll the balls in the crushed hazelnuts to form a coating of nuts on the outside, then roll them between your palms once more to embed the nuts in the chocolate. Refrigerate the truffles until they are very firm.

Using dipping tools, dip the truffles in the tempered chocolate as described on page 90. While the chocolate is still wet, sprinkle the tops with extra chopped hazelnuts remaining from the previous step. Let the chocolate set completely. Store Crunchy Hazelnut Truffles in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and let them come to room temperature completely before serving.



Pink Grapefruit Truffles

Yield: 36 truffles

These sparkling truffles are bursting with the vibrant flavor of fresh pink grapefruit. Both the zest and the juice of the citrus fruit are incorporated into the truffles, so they have a strong sweet-tart taste that acts as a nice balance to the sweet milk and white chocolate ganache.

1 pink grapefruit, preferably organic
2²/₃ ounces or 1/3 cup (80 ml) heavy cream

9 ounces (252 g) white chocolate, finely chopped

3 ounces (84 g) milk chocolate, finely chopped

1/8 teaspoon salt

1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 pound (454 g) white chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26), for dipping

Yellow and pink luster dust, for decoration (optional)

Spray an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-cm) pan with nonstick cooking spray and line the pan with plastic wrap.

Use a Microplane to finely zest the grapefruit, and squeeze 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of juice from the grapefruit. Set the juice aside for a moment, and place the zest in a small saucepan along with the heavy cream over medium-high heat. Once it just reaches a boil, remove the pan from the heat, cover it tightly with a lid, and let it sit for 30 minutes to allow the flavor to infuse.

After 30 minutes, remove the lid, return the pan to the heat, and bring the cream back to a boil. Place the chopped white and milk chocolates in a bowl. Pour the cream onto the chopped chocolate through a fine-mesh strainer to strain out the grapefruit zest. Let the cream soften the chocolate for 1 minute, then add the 2 tablespoons (30 ml) grapefruit juice and the salt. Whisk until the chocolates melt and your ganache is smooth. Add the room temperature butter and whisk it in until incorporated. Pour the ganache into the prepared pan, smooth it into an even layer, and refrigerate it until firm, about 90 minutes.

After the ganache is firm, remove it from the pan and peel off the plastic wrap. Spread a few ounces of melted white chocolate evenly on top of the ganache to form a "foot" as described on page 91. Once the chocolate sets, cut the ganache into 36 small squares and let them sit overnight at cool room temperature to dry the ganache.

Using dipping tools, dip the truffles in the tempered white chocolate as described on page 91. Let the chocolate set completely. If you want to decorate the truffles with luster dust, use the dry brush decorating technique as described on page 143. Start brushing yellow dust from one corner of the truffle until you reach the middle of the truffle. Once all of the truffles have yellow luster dust, repeat the process by brushing pink luster dust from the opposite corner, blending the colors in the center of the truffle. Store Pink Grapefruit Truffles in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and let them come to room temperature completely before serving.



Lime Coconut Truffles

Yield: 36 truffles

These truffles are a fun, flavorful blend of tart lime, tropical coconut, and sweet white chocolate. I like the pure taste of shredded coconut, but if you want an even stronger coconut flavor, add $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 teaspoon coconut extract to the ganache after it is blended.

1 large lime, preferably organic

4 ounces or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (120 ml) heavy cream

$2\frac{2}{3}$ ounces or 1 cup plus 3 tablespoons (75 g) unsweetened shredded coconut, divided

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt

9 ounces (252 g) white chocolate, finely chopped

2 ounces or 4 tablespoons (56 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

Powdered sugar, for dusting

1 pound (454 g) white chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26), for dipping

Use a Microplane to finely zest the lime, and squeeze 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of juice from the lime. Set the juice aside for a moment, and place the zest in a small saucepan along with the heavy cream and 3 tablespoons (12 g) of the shredded coconut.

Place the pan over medium-high heat and bring the cream to a boil. Once it just reaches a boil, remove the pan from the heat, cover it tightly with a lid, and let it sit for 30 minutes to allow the lime and coconut flavors to infuse.

Place the chopped white chocolate in a medium bowl. After the cream has infused for 30 minutes, remove the lid, return the pan to the heat, and bring the cream back to a boil. Pour the cream onto the white chocolate through a fine wire-mesh strainer to strain out the lime zest and coconut solids. Let the cream soften the chocolate for 1 minute, then add the salt and 1 tablespoon (15 ml) lime juice, and whisk everything together until the mixture is smooth. Add the room temperature butter and whisk it into the ganache until incorporated. Press a layer of plastic wrap directly on top of the ganache and let it sit until it reaches room temperature.

Once at room temperature, refrigerate the ganache until it is firm enough to scoop into balls, about 2 hours. Use a small 1-inch (2.5-cm) candy scoop to form balls of ganache and place them on a sheet of parchment, as described on page 89. Dust your hands with a light layer of powdered sugar and roll the balls between your palms to get them perfectly round. Let the truffles sit at cool room temperature overnight to dry and set the ganache.

Hand-dip the truffles in the tempered white chocolate as described on page 90, and while the chocolate is still wet, roll the truffles in the remaining 1 cup (63 g) shredded coconut. Store these truffles in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and bring them to room temperature before serving.



Strawberry–Balsamic Vinegar Truffles

Yield: 40 truffles

Vinegar might seem like an unlikely addition to a truffle recipe, but it actually brings a wonderfully tart flavor to these strawberry truffles. The base of the truffles is made with a highly concentrated strawberry purée, so the overwhelming taste is that of fresh, flavorful strawberries. The vinegar adds just the right background note of acidity and tanginess.

Fresh strawberries are preferred for their superior flavor, but if they are not available, frozen strawberries will also work in this recipe.

- 8 ounces (224 g) fresh or frozen strawberries**
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) heavy cream**
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) balsamic vinegar**
- 12 ounces (336 g) white chocolate, finely chopped**
- 1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature**
- Pink food coloring**
- Powdered sugar, for dusting**
- 1 pound (454 g) milk chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26), for dipping**
- ½ ounce or ¼ cup (14 g) finely chopped freeze-dried strawberries, for decoration**

Place the strawberries in a saucepan over medium heat and heat them until they release their juices and start to soften. Blend the strawberries, along with their juices, in a blender or food processor. Pour the strawberry purée through a fine-mesh strainer to remove the seeds. Depending on your berries, you will be left with approximately 5 to 6½ ounces or ½ to ⅔ cup (140 to 182 g) strawberry purée.

Pour the purée into a small saucepan and bring it to a simmer. Simmer the purée, stirring frequently, until it reduces to 2½ ounces or ¼ cup (70 g) concentrated strawberry purée. Add the heavy cream and the balsamic vinegar to the concentrated purée, and bring it to a boil.

Place the chopped white chocolate in a medium bowl, and pour the hot strawberry mixture over the chocolate. Let the cream soften the white chocolate for 1 minute, then whisk everything together until the chocolate has melted and the ganache is smooth. The mixture will be very thick. Add the room temperature butter and whisk it into the ganache until incorporated. Add a drop or two of pink food coloring to give your ganache a fresh pink color. Press a layer of plastic wrap directly on top of the ganache and let it sit until it reaches room temperature.

Once at room temperature, refrigerate the ganache until it is firm enough to scoop into balls, about 2 hours. Use a small 1-inch (2.5-cm) candy scoop to form balls of ganache and place them on a sheet of parchment, as described on page 89. Dust your hands with a light layer of powdered sugar and roll the balls between your palms to get them perfectly round. Let the truffles sit at cool room temperature overnight to dry and set the ganache.

Using dipping tools, dip the truffles in the tempered milk chocolate as described on page 90. While the chocolate is still wet, sprinkle the tops with a generous pinch of finely chopped freeze-dried strawberries. Let the chocolate set completely. Store Strawberry–Balsamic Vinegar Truffles in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and let them come to room temperature completely before serving.



Raspberry Rose Truffles

Yield: 30 truffles

Famed French pastry chef Pierre Hermé is known for developing flavor combinations (called “fetishes”) that are then used in a number of different dessert permutations. One of his most famous, known as Ispahan, is a heady blend of raspberry, rose, and lychee flavors. The combination is unusual, unexpected, and absolutely stunning.

This recipe for raspberry rose truffles is a humble homage to Hermé’s Ispahan. I left out the lychee—mimicking one of the world’s best pastry chefs is a fool’s errand—but kept the interplay of sweet-tart raspberries and mellow rose flavors. Be warned that this recipe produces a loose ganache that is best used in molded truffles—it is not firm enough to be successfully rolled and dipped.

1½ pounds (681 g) milk chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26), for molding

8 ounces (224 g) fresh or frozen raspberries

2 ounces or ¼ cup (60 ml) heavy cream

1½ ounces or 2 tablespoons (42 g) light corn syrup

5 ounces (140 g) finely chopped dark chocolate

1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 teaspoon rose water (see Note below)

Pink luster dust, for decorating

Line thirty 1-inch (2.5-cm) chocolate molds with the tempered milk chocolate, as on page 31. Make sure the chocolate lining the molds is completely set.

Place the raspberries in a saucepan over medium heat and heat them until they release their juices. Blend the raspberries, along with their juices, in a blender or food processor. Pour the raspberry purée through a fine-mesh strainer to remove the seeds.

Pour the purée into a small saucepan and bring it to a simmer. Simmer the purée, stirring frequently, until it reduces to 2½ ounces or ¼ cup (70 g) concentrated raspberry purée. Add the heavy cream and light corn syrup to the purée and stir everything together. Bring the mixture just to a boil.

Place the chopped dark chocolate in a medium bowl, and pour the hot raspberry mixture over the chocolate. Let the cream soften the chocolate for 1 minute, then whisk everything together until the chocolate has melted. Add the room temperature butter and whisk it into the ganache until incorporated, then whisk in the rose water. Press a layer of plastic wrap directly on top of the ganache and let it sit until it reaches room temperature.

Spoon or pipe the room temperature ganache into the prepared chocolate molds, being sure to leave room at the top to seal the molds with chocolate. Once the molds are filled, refrigerate the molds for 45 minutes, until the ganache mixture is firm.

Seal the tops of the molds with the tempered milk chocolate and let the chocolate set for 45 minutes at room temperature. Once set, carefully remove the chocolates from the molds. Decorate them with pink luster dusting using the dry brush technique described on page 143.

Store Raspberry Rose Truffles in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and allow them to come to room temperature before serving.

NOTE: Rose water is a common flavoring in Persian desserts, and can often be found in the ethnic food section of many large grocery stores. If you cannot find rose water, a smaller amount of rose candy flavoring or rose oil can be substituted, or you can omit it entirely and enjoy plain raspberry truffles.



Almond Amaretti Truffles

Yield: 26 truffles

Almond haters move along, there's nothing to see here. These truffles have a robust almond flavor that comes from almond paste in the chocolate ganache and the almond-flavored amaretti cookies that coat the outside of the truffles.

4 ounces (112 g) amaretti cookies
(see Note below)

7 ounces (196 g) almond paste

2²/₃ ounces or 1/3 cup (80 ml) heavy cream

12 ounces (336 g) dark chocolate, finely chopped

Cocoa powder, for dusting

1 pound (454 g) dark chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26), for dipping

Place the amaretti cookies in the bowl of a food processor and blend into very fine crumbs. Alternately, place them in a zip-top plastic bag and crush them with a rolling pin until the cookies are fine crumbs.

Finely chop the almond paste or grate it using a cheese grater. Combine the chopped almond paste, the cream, and the chopped dark chocolate in a large microwave-safe bowl. Microwave in 30-second intervals, stirring after every 30 seconds, until the chocolate melts, the almond paste dissolves, and the mixture is fluid and shiny. Because of the almond paste, there will be a slightly grainy texture to the ganache at this point, but the addition of the crunchy cookies will eliminate any textural problems. Add 1½ ounces or ¼ cup (42 g) of the crushed amaretti cookies to the ganache and stir everything together. Reserve the rest of the cookie crumbs for finishing the truffles. Press a layer of plastic wrap directly on top of the ganache and let it sit until it reaches room temperature.

Once at room temperature, refrigerate the ganache until it is firm enough to scoop into balls, about 1 hour. Use a small 1-inch (2.5-cm) candy scoop to form balls of ganache and place them on a sheet of parchment, as described on page 89. Dust your hands with a light layer of cocoa powder and roll the balls between your palms to get them perfectly round. Let the truffles sit at cool room temperature overnight to dry and set the ganache.

Hand-dip the truffles in the tempered dark chocolate as described on page 90, and while the chocolate is still wet, roll the truffles in the remaining crushed amaretti cookies. Store Almond Amaretti Truffles in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and bring them to room temperature before serving.

NOTE: Amaretti cookies can be found in many gourmet supermarkets, Italian delis, or online shops.



Chocolate Candies



I cannot argue with the simple appeal of a bar of solid chocolate, but sometimes chocolate is best enjoyed in combination with other flavors and textures. Eating a whole slab of chocolate in one sitting can be daunting, but when that chocolate is studded with salty nuts or crispy toffee, well . . . somehow that bar miraculously disappears in record time.

In this chapter, chocolate is paired with an assortment of different fruits, nuts, candies, and even cookies to make easy, crowd-pleasing barks, clusters, and more. Rather than masking the taste of the chocolate, these mix-ins highlight chocolate's flavor and versatility. Most of the recipes require minimal time and preparation, so this chapter is a good place to start if you're new to chocolate making or if you're simply short on time and need a chocolate fix in a hurry.

* Troubleshooting Chocolate Candies *

My chocolate gets too thick when I add my mix-ins.

If your chocolate is already on the low end of the workable range for tempered chocolate, adding other ingredients can cause it to cool too quickly and set in the bowl. When making barks or clusters, monitor the temperature of your chocolate to make sure it is in the workable range, and make sure that any ingredients you add are at room temperature.

My chocolate candies are streaky, spotted, or soft at room temperature.

These are all classic signs of chocolate "bloom," meaning that your chocolate was not tempered properly. There is nothing that can be done to change the chocolates once they have been formed, but refer to page 26 for tempering instructions to avoid this problem in the future.

Sweet and Salty Bark

Yield: 1 pound 12 ounces (784 g)



**4 ounces or about 1½ cups (112 g)
chopped pretzel twists**

**6 ounces or about 1 cup (168 g)
chopped toffee bits**

**18 ounces (504 g) dark or milk
chocolate, melted and tempered
(see page 26)**

Flaked sea salt, for finishing

Barks are one of my favorite chocolate treats because they are so easy to make. Virtually any candy ingredient can be added to melted chocolate and turned into chocolate bark. This makes a bark recipe the ideal vehicle for using up extra chocolate, nuts, and fruits you have left over from other projects. The result is a charming homemade candy, full of contrasting flavors and textures, that is rarely made the same way twice.

To make this addicting bark, salty pretzel pieces and buttery toffee bits are mixed with chocolate and topped with a generous sprinkling of crunchy flaked sea salt. You can use premade toffee bits, chop up store-bought toffee bars, or make your own English Toffee (page 70) to use in this recipe.

Cover a baking sheet with a layer of aluminum foil or parchment paper. Set aside ¼ cup (20 g) of the pretzels and ¼ cup (42 g) of the toffee bits, and stir the remaining 1¼ cups (92 g) pretzels and ¾ cup (126 g) toffee bits into the melted, tempered chocolate.

Scrape the chocolate out onto the prepared pan, and spread it into a thin layer a little more than ¼ inch (6 mm) thick. It does not have to cover the entire baking sheet.

While the chocolate is still wet, sprinkle the reserved pretzel pieces and toffee over the top of the chocolate, and press down gently to adhere them to the chocolate. Top the bark with a generous sprinkling of flaked sea salt.

Let the bark set at room temperature for 45 minutes, or in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. Once it is completely set, break the bark apart into small pieces by hand. Store Sweet and Salty Bark in an airtight container at cool room temperature for up to a month.

Zebra Bark

Yield: 1 pound 4 ounces (560 g)

The black and white color scheme of this Zebra Bark may be visually striking, but this candy is more than just a pretty face. Dark chocolate, white chocolate, chocolate-covered nuts, and yogurt-covered raisins combine to produce a chocolate bark with a range of textures and flavors that tastes as good as it looks.

12 ounces (336 g) dark chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

4 ounces (112 g) white chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

2 ounces or 1/3 cup (56 g) chocolate-covered peanuts

2½ ounces or 1/3 cup (70 g) yogurt-covered raisins

Cover a baking sheet with a layer of aluminum foil or parchment paper. Pour the tempered dark chocolate onto the sheet, and spread it into a thin layer about ¼ inch (6 mm) thick. It doesn't need to cover the entire baking sheet.

While the dark chocolate is still wet, pour the tempered white chocolate into a zip-top plastic bag and cut a small hole in one corner for the chocolate to flow through. (Alternately, you can use a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip.) Starting at the top of the dark chocolate, draw white chocolate lines across the width of the chocolate, spacing them about ½ inch (1.3 cm) apart. Continue until you have drawn lines across the whole slab of chocolate.

Drag a toothpick through both chocolates, starting at the top corner and pulling the toothpick down the length of the chocolate. When you get to the bottom, move the toothpick over ¼ inch (6 mm) and drag it upward, creating a chevron design in the chocolate. Continue swirling the chocolate together in an up-and-down pattern until all of the chocolate is swirled in a zebra pattern.

Scatter the chocolate-covered peanuts and the yogurt-covered raisins over the top of the bark, gently pressing them down to adhere them to the chocolate.

Let the bark set at room temperature for 45 minutes, or in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. Once it is completely set, break the bark apart into small pieces by hand. Store Zebra Bark at cool room temperature for up to a month.

VARIATION: There are many different varieties of chocolate- and yogurt-covered fruit and nuts, so feel free to experiment with substituting other nuts or fruit for the peanuts and raisins in the recipe. Just be sure to keep to the black and white color scheme!



Ice Cream Sundae Bark

Yield: 1 pound 4 ounces (560 g)

Ice cream sundaes are great, but they're not the most portable (or gift-able) of treats. I decided to recreate the taste of a classic sundae in bark form, using all of the familiar favorites: a creamy vanilla base, salty peanuts, a chocolate drizzle, colorful sprinkles, and of course, a cherry on top! Vanilla beans are expensive, so I consider it an optional ingredient, but if you have one available, it adds a strong vanilla flavor to the white chocolate that makes it taste more like vanilla ice cream.

2½ ounces or ⅓ cup (70 g) coarsely chopped maraschino cherries

1 vanilla bean (optional, for a stronger vanilla flavor)

12 ounces (336 g) white chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

1½ ounces or ¼ cup (42 g) chopped toffee bits

1½ ounces or ¼ cup (42 g) chopped salted peanuts

1 ounce (28 g) dark chocolate, melted (see page 26)

1 ounce or 3 tablespoons (28 g) colored sprinkles

Spread the chopped maraschino cherries out onto a length of paper towel and carefully and thoroughly pat them dry. Cover a baking sheet with a layer of aluminum foil or parchment paper.

If you are using the vanilla bean, split it in half lengthwise with a sharp paring knife. Scrape out the seeds from the bean and add the seeds to the white chocolate, stirring until they are thoroughly mixed in.

Set aside 2 tablespoons (21 g) each of the chopped toffee bits and chopped salted peanuts. Stir the remaining 2 tablespoons (21 g) of the toffee and nuts into the tempered white chocolate. Scrape the chocolate onto the prepared baking sheet and spread it into a thin, even layer. It does not need to cover the entire sheet.

While the white chocolate is still wet, drizzle the melted dark chocolate on top in a random, swirling pattern. Sprinkle the reserved chopped toffee and peanuts on top, then scatter the colored sprinkles all over the top of the bark. Finally, sprinkle the chopped maraschino cherries over the top. Gently press down on the cherries to adhere them to the melted chocolate.

Let the bark set at room temperature for 45 minutes, or in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. Once it is completely set, break the bark apart into small pieces by hand. Store Ice Cream Sundae Bark in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

VARIATIONS: There are many other ice cream-themed ingredients you could add to this bark! Consider including a handful of chopped caramel pieces, miniature marshmallows, or chopped banana chips to the melted white chocolate.



Sour Cherry and Macadamia Nut Clusters

Yield: 24 candies



Like barks, clusters are both a convenient way to use up leftover ingredients and an easy, satisfying candy. These clusters combine a few of my favorite things: tangy dried cherries, salty macadamia nuts, and sweet, crispy meringue cookies. You can always vary the fruit and nuts to suit your own tastes.

3 ounces or ½ cup (84 g) coarsely chopped tart dried cherries (see Note)

3 ounces or ½ cup (84 g) coarsely chopped salted macadamia nuts

⅔ ounce or ½ cup (19 g) chopped meringue cookies

12 ounces (336 g) dark chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

Cover a baking sheet with a layer of aluminum foil or parchment paper.

Add the chopped dried cherries, the chopped macadamia nuts, and the chopped meringue cookies to the tempered chocolate, and stir until all of the ingredients are well distributed and coated with chocolate.

Using a teaspoon or a small candy scoop, drop spoonfuls of the chocolate mixture onto the prepared baking sheet. Once all of the clusters are formed, let them set at room temperature for about 30 minutes, or in the refrigerator for 15 minutes.

Store Sour Cherry and Macadamia Nut Clusters at cool room temperature for up to a month.

NOTE: Tart dried cherries are different from regular dried cherries, which are much sweeter. If you can't find tart dried cherries, dried cranberries are a good substitute.

Chocolate Medallions

Yield: 24 candies

The familiar grouping of dried fruits, nuts, and chocolate in this recipe is not too different from many chocolate cluster recipes, but the finished look of these medallions is a bit more elegant. Chocolate Medallions take their inspiration from French *mendiants*, a traditional candy composed of a chocolate disk studded with four different fruits and nuts whose colors represent four different monastic orders. My medallions are decidedly less symbolic—I simply decorate them with toppings that I enjoy eating!



2/3 ounce (19 g) or about 4 large strips candied orange peel (see page 132)

10 ounces (280 g) dark or milk chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

1 1/2 ounces or 1/4 cup (42 g) toasted, salted pistachios (see page 33)

1 1/2 ounces or 1/4 cup (42 g) dried cranberries

Cover a baking sheet with aluminum foil or parchment paper. Cut the candied orange peel into small pieces about the size of the pistachios and cranberries.

Use a large spoon to drop a dollop of chocolate onto the baking sheet. Gently nudge it outward in a circle until the chocolate disk is about 1 1/2 inches (3.8 cm) in diameter. Form two more circles, then carefully place an assortment of the pistachios, cranberries, and slivered orange peel on top of the chocolate disks. The toppings should look deliberate, not jumbled together, so aim for five or six well-placed pieces per disk.

Repeat this process, making about three medallions at a time, until you've run out of chocolate and toppings. Let the medallions set at room temperature for about 30 minutes. Store them between layers of waxed paper or parchment paper at cool room temperature for up to a month.

Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups

Yield: 24 peanut butter cups

Peanut butter may be commonly paired with jelly, but I believe its true soul mate is actually chocolate. The combination of smooth, salty peanut butter and rich, creamy chocolate is so enjoyable, I'm sometimes tempted to change my PB & J sandwiches to PB & C sandwiches instead. If this seems nutritionally dubious to you, I suggest you enjoy these Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups instead. They're modeled after the popular store-bought candy, but because they're made fresh in your own kitchen, using quality ingredients, the taste is far superior.

The graham cracker crumbs in the filling can be omitted; I include them because it gives the filling a slightly crumbly texture that's similar to store-bought peanut butter cups. If you prefer a smoother filling, by all means leave out the crumbs.

12 ounces (336 g) dark or milk chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

9½ ounces or 1 cup (266 g) smooth peanut butter

2¼ ounces or ½ cup (60 g) sifted powdered sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

¾ ounce or ¼ cup (21 g) graham cracker crumbs (from about 1½ crushed graham crackers)

Lay out 24 small candy cups on your work surface. Working with three or four cups at a time, spoon a bit of chocolate into each cup so that they are approximately one-quarter full (**A, on page 109**). Use a small, clean, food-safe paintbrush to brush the tempered chocolate up the sides of each cup in a smooth, even layer (**B, on page 109**). Make sure the sides are completely covered, and periodically hold a cup up to the light to see if there are any translucent areas that need to be covered with a thicker layer of chocolate. Repeat until all of your cups are lined with chocolate. You will have extra chocolate left over for covering the top later on. Refrigerate the chocolate shells until they are set.

While the chocolate is firming up, make the peanut butter filling. In a medium bowl, combine the peanut butter, powdered sugar, salt, and graham cracker crumbs. Stir until the filling is smooth and there are no dry pockets of sugar or crumbs.

Once the shells are firm, fill them with the peanut butter mixture. You can either spoon it in or use a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch (1.3-cm) round tip to pipe peanut butter filling into the chocolate shells (**C, on page 109**). Leave at least ⅛ inch (3 mm) between the filling and the top of the chocolate cup, so that they can be covered with chocolate.

If necessary, re-warm the extra chocolate. Spoon a bit of chocolate onto the top of each cup and gently tilt the cup or nudge the chocolate with your spoon so that it covers all of the peanut butter and forms a tight seal with the sides of the chocolate cup (**D, on page 109**).

Let the chocolate set completely at room temperature for 30 minutes, or in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. Store Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a month.

(continued on page 109)



VARIATIONS: Virtually any nut or seed butter can be substituted for peanut butter in this recipe, and chocolate-nut spreads and cookie-based spreads are a more indulgent substitute. If you are using a sweet spread, consider reducing the sugar and increasing the graham cracker crumbs to prevent the filling from becoming too sweet.

These chocolate cups can also be used with a number of other fillings, like a soft caramel or a loose ganache. You can even use these to make petit fours by adding a swirl of mousse, a dollop of whipped cream, or a spoonful of ice cream.



- A.** Fill the candy cups one-quarter full of tempered chocolate.
- B.** Use a small, food-safe paintbrush to brush the chocolate up the sides of the cups.
- C.** After the chocolate has set, spoon or pipe your filling into the cups, leaving space at the top.
- D.** Cover the cups with melted chocolate, making sure it covers all of the filling.

Marshmallows



Freshly made marshmallows bear little relation to their sad, store-bought cousins. If your only exposure to marshmallows has been in the form of stale cylinders tasting vaguely of artificial vanilla, you are in for a treat! Homemade marshmallows are light and fluffy, with a pillowy texture that melts in the mouth. These are marshmallows you'll want to eat plain, but if you're able to resist eating the whole pan, they're also excellent in hot chocolate and any number of baking recipes. Very Vanilla Marshmallows (page 113) are the perfect all-purpose marshmallow, but if you're ready for more adventurous flavors, I urge you to try your hand at chocolate, Neapolitan, or fruit-flavored marshmallows.

* Troubleshooting Marshmallows *

My egg whites are liquid even after whipping them in the mixer—they will not form firm peaks.

Egg whites won't whip properly if they come into contact with any fat. This includes bits of the egg yolk that might be left in the whites, or any residual grease in the mixing bowl. For the best results, make sure your egg whites are at room temperature, and that there are no specks of egg yolk in the whites. Wash and dry the mixing bowl very thoroughly to remove all traces of grease before whipping egg whites.

My marshmallows are too stiff to scrape into the pan.

The marshmallows have likely been overbeaten, and the gelatin has started to set, resulting in a stiff, lumpy texture that won't make appealing marshmallows. You can try to save them by placing the mixing bowl over a water bath full of simmering water, and stirring until the marshmallow loosens up. Immediately pour the marshmallow into your pan and smooth it into an even layer.

My marshmallows have set, but they are too soft and sticky.

Overly soft and sticky marshmallows can be caused by a variety of factors. If you tried to make the marshmallows on a humid or stormy day, the weather could be to blame. Marshmallows are best made on days with low humidity. Another possibility is that the sugar syrup was not cooked to a high enough temperature—next time, calibrate your thermometer before beginning (see page 23) and be sure to cook the syrup to the temperature specified in the recipe. Finally, you just may have a personal preference for very firm marshmallows, in which case you should increase the amount of gelatin in the recipe to get a firmer marshmallow.

* How to Make Marshmallows *

Every marshmallow recipe is a little different, but here is a general guide for making homemade marshmallows.



- A.** Whisk the gelatin into cold water and let it sit until the water is absorbed.
- B.** Combine the ingredients for the sugar syrup and cook it to the specified temperature.
- C.** While the sugar syrup boils, whip the egg whites until firm peaks form.
- D.** Heat the gelatin until it is liquid, and whisk together the liquid gelatin and the hot sugar syrup.
- E.** With the mixer running, pour the sugar syrup into the egg whites.
- F.** Increase the speed to high and beat the marshmallow until it is very thick and shiny and forms a thick ribbon when you lift the beater. Add any colorings or flavorings and mix them in.
- G.** Scrape the marshmallow into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer. Let it set undisturbed overnight.
- H.** Dust the marshmallow with powdered sugar and cut it into small squares.
- I.** Dredge the squares in powdered sugar to prevent them from sticking together.

Very Vanilla Marshmallows

Yield: 1 pound 6 ounces (616 g)



Very Vanilla Marshmallows prove that sometimes the simplest flavors are the most enjoyable. These plush marshmallows are flavored with nothing but aromatic vanilla, but when the taste is this good, you don't need any additional bells or whistles! Enjoy these marshmallows on their own, or use them to make s'mores, rocky road candy, or crispy rice treats.

2½ ounces (70 g) or 2 large egg whites, at room temperature

8 ounces or 1 cup (235 ml) cold water, divided

¾ ounce (21 g) or 3 (¼-ounce, or 7-g) envelopes unflavored gelatin

14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g) granulated sugar

5½ ounces or ½ cup (154 g) light corn syrup

¼ teaspoon salt

1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 g) vanilla bean paste (see Note on page 114)

4 ounces or 1 cup (112 g) powdered sugar

Line a 9 x 13-inch (23 x 33-cm) baking pan with aluminum foil or plastic wrap, and spray the foil or plastic wrap with nonstick cooking spray.

Place the room temperature egg whites in the bowl of a large stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment.

Pour ½ cup (118 ml) of the cold water into a small bowl, and whisk in the gelatin. Set the bowl aside to let the gelatin “bloom,” or absorb the water.

Pour the remaining ½ cup (118 ml) water into a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan, and stir in the granulated sugar, the light corn syrup, and the salt. Place the pan over medium-high heat and continue to stir until the sugar dissolves. Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to remove any stray sugar crystals. Insert a candy thermometer.

Cook the sugar syrup, without stirring, until the thermometer reaches 260°F (127°C). This will take 10 to 15 minutes, so while you're waiting for the sugar to cook, microwave the gelatin bowl for about 20 seconds, until the gelatin liquefies.

(continued on next page)

Very Vanilla Marshmallows (continued)

When the sugar syrup reaches 245°F (118°C), begin beating the egg whites on medium speed. The egg whites should be well beaten and be able to hold firm peaks at approximately the same time the sugar syrup reaches 260°F (127°C).

When the sugar syrup is at 260°F (127°C), remove the pan from the heat and carefully whisk in the liquid gelatin mixture. It will bubble up and steam a bit, so watch your hands during this step.

The hot sugar syrup now needs to be added to the egg whites. If your saucepan does not have a spout, pour the syrup into a large mixing cup or pitcher with a spout, to give you more control over the process. Turn the mixer to low, and with the mixer running, slowly stream the hot sugar syrup into the beaten egg whites. Try to pour the syrup close to the sides of the bowl, so it doesn't hit the whisk and splatter everywhere.

Once all of the syrup is added to the whites, gradually increase the speed of the mixer until it is running on medium-high speed. Whip the marshmallow until it is very thick, shiny, and opaque, about 8 to 10 minutes, depending on your mixer. When you lift the whisk from the marshmallow, it should slowly stream from the whisk in a thick ribbon. Add the vanilla bean paste and mix the marshmallow for another 20 seconds to distribute the paste.

Pour the marshmallow into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer. Let the marshmallow sit and rest, undisturbed, at room temperature until it is completely set, about 8 hours.

When you're ready to cut the marshmallow, dust your work surface with powdered sugar, and sprinkle a layer of powdered sugar on top of the marshmallow. Flip the marshmallow facedown onto the work surface and peel the foil or plastic wrap off the back. Dust a large chef's knife with powdered sugar and cut the marshmallow into long thin strips, cleaning the knife frequently as it gets sticky. Cut the strips of marshmallow into small squares. Toss the marshmallow squares in powdered sugar to prevent them from sticking together. Store the marshmallows in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

NOTE: Vanilla bean paste is a favorite ingredient of pastry chefs, and it is becoming more common in household pantries as well. It's a thick paste full of vanilla seeds, with a bold flavor and a beautiful vanilla-speckled appearance. For ideas on where to find vanilla bean paste, see the Resources section on page 154. If you don't have the paste, you can substitute seeds scraped from 2 vanilla pods, or 2 tablespoons (30 ml) vanilla extract.

VARIATION: To make other flavors of marshmallow, omit the vanilla bean paste and add 1 to 2 teaspoons of a flavoring extract, depending on the strength of the extract.

Dark Chocolate Marshmallows

Yield: 1 pound 6 ounces (616 g)

I've never met a candy I didn't want to chocolate-ify. (This is actually true of almost all foods.) In this recipe, marshmallows get the chocolate treatment with the addition of a hefty dose of cocoa powder, resulting in a deep, dark chocolate flavor. If a rich chocolate marshmallow isn't quite indulgent enough for you, try dipping them partially or completely in tempered chocolate.

11 ounces or 1¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons (325 ml) cold water, divided

2⅓ ounces or ⅓ cup plus ¼ cup (65 g) unsweetened cocoa powder, divided

¾ ounce (21 g) or 3 (¼-ounce, or 7-g) envelopes unflavored gelatin

14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g) granulated sugar

8¼ ounces or ¾ cup (231 g) light corn syrup

3 ounces or ¾ cup (84 g) powdered sugar



Line a 9 x 9-inch (23 x 23-cm) baking pan with aluminum foil or plastic wrap, and spray the foil or plastic wrap with nonstick cooking spray.

Heat ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons (90 ml) of the water in a small bowl in the microwave for 2 minutes. Add 1⅓ ounces or ⅓ cup (37 g) of the cocoa powder to the hot water and whisk until the cocoa dissolves, then set aside.

Pour ½ cup (120 ml) of the cold water into the bowl of a stand mixer. Sprinkle the gelatin on top and whisk it in.

In a medium saucepan, combine the remaining ½ cup (120 ml) water, the granulated sugar, and the corn syrup. Place the pan over medium-high heat and stir until the sugar dissolves. Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to remove any stray sugar crystals, and insert a candy thermometer. Cook the sugar syrup, without stirring, until the thermometer reaches 250°F (121°C).

When the sugar syrup is almost done cooking, add the cocoa mixture to the gelatin and mix them together on low speed. Once the sugar syrup reaches 250°F (121°C), the syrup now needs to be added to the gelatin. If your saucepan does not have a spout, pour the syrup into a large mixing cup or pitcher with a spout, to give you more control over the process. Turn the mixer to low, and with the mixer running, slowly stream the hot sugar syrup into the gelatin. Try to pour the syrup close to the sides of the bowl, so it doesn't hit the whisk and splatter everywhere.

Once all of the syrup is added to the mixing bowl, gradually increase the speed of the mixer until it is running on medium-high speed. Whip the marshmallow until it is very thick, shiny, and opaque, about 8 to 10 minutes, depending on your mixer. When you lift the whisk from the marshmallow, it should slowly stream from the whisk in a thick ribbon.

Pour the marshmallow into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer. Let the marshmallow sit and rest, undisturbed, at room temperature until it is completely set, about 8 hours.

When you're ready to cut the marshmallow, mix together the remaining ¼ cup (28 g) cocoa powder and the powdered sugar, and sprinkle this mixture on top of the marshmallow. Flip the marshmallow facedown onto the work surface and peel the foil or plastic wrap off the back. Dust a large chef's knife with the powdered sugar and cocoa mixture and cut the marshmallow into long thin strips, cleaning the knife frequently as it gets sticky. Cut the strips of marshmallow into small squares. Toss the marshmallow squares in the powdered sugar and cocoa mixture to prevent them from sticking together. Store the marshmallows in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Peppermint Swirl Marshmallows

Yield: 1 pound 6 ounces (616 g)

These marshmallows have a refreshing mint flavor and a sweet red-and-white swirled pattern on top. They make a perfect treat for the winter holiday season, but I think when a candy looks and tastes this good, it never goes out of style.

2½ ounces (70 g) or 2 large egg whites, at room temperature
8 ounces or 1 cup (235 ml) cold water, divided
¾ ounce (21 g) or 3 (¼-ounce, or 7-g) envelopes unflavored gelatin
14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g) granulated sugar
5½ ounces or ½ cup (154 g) light corn syrup
¼ teaspoon salt
½ to 1 teaspoon peppermint extract
Red gel food coloring
4 ounces or 1 cup (112 g) powdered sugar

Line a 9 x 13-inch (23 x 33-cm) baking pan with aluminum foil or plastic wrap, and spray the foil or plastic wrap with nonstick cooking spray.

Place the room temperature egg whites in the bowl of a large stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment.

Pour ½ cup (120 ml) of the cold water into a small bowl, and whisk in the gelatin. Set the bowl aside to let the gelatin “bloom,” or absorb the water.

Pour the remaining ½ cup (120 ml) water into a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan, and stir in the granulated sugar, the light corn syrup, and the salt. Place the pan over medium-high heat and continue to stir until the sugar dissolves. Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to remove any stray sugar crystals. Insert a candy thermometer.

Cook the sugar syrup, without stirring, until the thermometer reaches 260°F (127°C). This will take 10 to 15 minutes, so while you’re waiting for the sugar to cook, microwave the gelatin bowl for about 20 seconds, until the gelatin liquefies.

When the sugar syrup reaches 245°F (118°C), begin beating the egg whites on medium speed. The egg whites should be well beaten and be able to hold firm peaks at approximately the same time the sugar syrup reaches 260°F (127°C).

When the sugar syrup is at 260°F (127°C), remove the pan from the heat and carefully whisk in the liquid gelatin mixture. It will bubble up and steam a bit, so watch your hands during this step.

The hot sugar syrup now needs to be added to the egg whites. If your saucepan does not have a spout, pour the syrup into a large mixing cup or pitcher with a spout, to give you more control over the process. Turn the mixer to low, and with the mixer running, slowly stream the hot sugar syrup into the beaten egg whites. Try to pour the syrup close to the sides of the bowl, so it doesn’t hit the whisk and splatter everywhere.

Once all of the syrup is added to the whites, gradually increase the speed of the mixer until it is running on medium-high speed. Whip the marshmallow until it is very thick, shiny, and opaque, about 8 to 10 minutes, depending on your mixer. When you lift the whisk from the marshmallow, it should slowly stream from the whisk in a thick ribbon. Add ½ teaspoon of the peppermint extract and mix for 20 seconds to incorporate it. Taste the marshmallow, and if you would like a stronger mint flavor, mix in the remaining ½ teaspoon peppermint extract.



Pour the marshmallow into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer. Drizzle the red food coloring over the top of the marshmallow in a random pattern. Drag a toothpick through the marshmallow, swirling the food coloring on top. Stop before the colors start to bleed, while you still have distinct red and white swirls. Let the marshmallow sit and rest, undisturbed, at room temperature until it is completely set, about 8 hours.

When you're ready to cut the marshmallow, dust your work surface with the powdered sugar, and sprinkle a layer of powdered sugar on top of the marshmallow. Flip the marshmallow facedown onto the work surface and peel the foil or plastic wrap off the back. Dust a large chef's knife with powdered sugar and cut the marshmallow into long thin strips, cleaning the knife frequently as it gets sticky. Cut the strips of marshmallow into small squares. Toss the marshmallow squares in powdered sugar to prevent them from sticking together. Store the marshmallows in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Neapolitan Marshmallows

Yield: 1 pound 12 ounces (794 g)

Why settle for one flavor of marshmallow when you can enjoy three flavors in one bite? These towering marshmallows combine the tastes of rich chocolate, fragrant vanilla, and fruity strawberry in one glorious layered confection.

FOR CHOCOLATE MARSHMALLOW LAYER:

- 1¼ ounces (35 g) or 1 large egg white, at room temperature
- 6 ounces or ¾ cup (180 ml) water, divided
- ⅓ ounce or 1 tablespoon (9 g) unflavored gelatin
- 7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar
- ¾ ounce or 1 tablespoon (21 g) light corn syrup
- ¼ ounce or 1 tablespoon (7 g) unsweetened cocoa powder

FOR VANILLA MARSHMALLOW LAYER:

- 1¼ ounces (35 g) or 1 large egg white, at room temperature
- 6 ounces or ¾ cup (180 ml) water, divided
- ⅓ ounce or 1 tablespoon (9 g) unflavored gelatin
- 7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar
- ¾ ounce or 1 tablespoon (21 g) light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Line a 9 x 13-inch (23 x 33-cm) baking pan with aluminum foil or plastic wrap, and spray the foil or plastic wrap with nonstick cooking spray.

To make the chocolate marshmallow layer: Place the room temperature egg white in the bowl of a large stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment.

Pour ¼ cup (60 ml) of the cold water into a small bowl, and whisk in the gelatin. Set the bowl aside to let the gelatin “bloom,” or absorb the water.

Pour the remaining ½ cup (120 ml) water into a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan, and stir in the granulated sugar and the light corn syrup. Place the pan over medium-high heat and continue to stir until the sugar dissolves. Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to remove any stray sugar crystals. Insert a candy thermometer.

Cook the sugar syrup, without stirring, until the thermometer reaches 260°F (127°C). While you’re waiting for the sugar to cook, microwave the gelatin bowl for about 20 seconds, until the gelatin liquefies.

When the sugar syrup reaches 245°F (118°C), begin beating the egg white on medium speed. The egg white should be well beaten and be able to hold firm peaks at approximately the same time the sugar syrup reaches 260°F (127°C).

When the sugar syrup is at 260°F (127°C), remove the pan from the heat and carefully whisk in the liquid gelatin mixture. It will bubble up and steam a bit, so watch your hands during this step.

The hot sugar syrup now needs to be added to the egg white. If your saucepan does not have a spout, pour the syrup into a large mixing cup or pitcher with a spout, to give you more control over the process. Turn the mixer to low, and with the mixer running, slowly stream the hot sugar syrup into the beaten egg whites. Try to pour the syrup close to the sides of the bowl, so it doesn’t hit the whisk and splatter everywhere.

Once all of the syrup is added to the whites, gradually increase the speed of the mixer until it is running on medium-high speed. Whip the marshmallow until it is very thick, shiny, and opaque, about 10 to 12 minutes, depending on your mixer. When you lift the whisk from the marshmallow, it should slowly stream from the whisk in a thick ribbon. Sift in the cocoa powder and mix for 20 seconds until it is well distributed.

Scrape the marshmallow into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer.

Repeat this process to make the vanilla marshmallow layer, adding vanilla extract instead of cocoa powder once the marshmallow has been whipped. Spread the vanilla marshmallow on top of the chocolate marshmallow layer.



FOR STRAWBERRY MARSHMALLOW LAYER:

1¼ ounces (35 g) or 1 large egg white, at room temperature

6 ounces or ¾ cup (180 ml) water, divided

⅓ ounce or 1 tablespoon (9 g) unflavored gelatin

7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar

¾ ounce or 1 tablespoon (21 g) light corn syrup

¼ to 1 teaspoon strawberry extract

Pink food coloring

4 ounces or 1 cup (112 g) powdered sugar

Finally, repeat this process once more to make the strawberry marshmallow. When you add the strawberry extract at the end, begin by adding only ¼ teaspoon. Different flavorings have very different strengths, and it's important to start with a small amount in case yours is very strong. Taste the marshmallow, and add more extract if desired. Add a drop or two of pink food coloring, and mix the marshmallow for 20 seconds to incorporate them. Pour the strawberry marshmallow over the vanilla marshmallow and smooth it into an even layer. Let the marshmallow sit and rest, undisturbed, at room temperature until it is completely set, about 8 hours.

When you're ready to cut the marshmallow, dust your work surface with the powdered sugar, and sprinkle a layer of powdered sugar on top of the marshmallow. Flip the marshmallow facedown onto the work surface and peel the foil or plastic wrap off the back. Dust a large chef's knife with powdered sugar and cut the marshmallow into long thin strips, cleaning the knife frequently as it gets sticky. Cut the strips of marshmallow into small squares. Toss the marshmallow squares in powdered sugar to prevent them from sticking together. Store the marshmallows in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Passion Fruit Marshmallows

Yield: 1½ pounds (681 g)

The sweet-tart flavor of passion fruit gives a tropical twist to traditional marshmallows! You can either use passion fruit pulp obtained from fresh passion fruit, or use frozen pulp that has been defrosted and brought to room temperature.

10 ounces or 1¼ cups (295 ml) cold water, divided

4¼ ounces or ½ cup (119 g) passion fruit pulp, strained

1 ounce (28 g) or 4 (¼-ounce, or 7-g) envelopes unflavored gelatin

1 pound 5 ounces or 3 cups (588 g) granulated sugar

13¾ ounces or 1¼ cups (385 g) light corn syrup

Yellow and orange food coloring

2⅔ ounces or ⅔ cup (75 g) powdered sugar

Line a 9 x 13-inch (23 x 33-cm) baking pan with aluminum foil or plastic wrap, and spray the foil or plastic wrap with nonstick cooking spray.

Combine ½ cup (120 ml) of the water and the passion fruit pulp in the bowl of a large stand mixer. Sprinkle the gelatin over the top and whisk it into the liquid.

Combine the remaining ¾ cup (180 ml) water, the granulated sugar, and the light corn syrup in a medium saucepan. Stir to dissolve the sugar, and brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent crystals from forming. Place the pan over medium-high heat and insert a candy thermometer.

Cook the sugar syrup without stirring until it reaches 245°F (118°C) on the candy thermometer. The hot sugar syrup now needs to be added to the gelatin. If your saucepan does not have a spout, pour the syrup into a large mixing cup or pitcher with a spout, to give you more control over the process. Turn the mixer to low, and with the mixer running, slowly stream the hot sugar syrup into the gelatin. Try to pour the syrup close to the sides of the bowl, so it doesn't hit the whisk and splatter everywhere.

Once all of the syrup is added to the mixing bowl, gradually increase the speed of the mixer until it is running on medium-high speed. Whip the marshmallow until it is very thick, shiny, and opaque, about 8 to 10 minutes, depending on your mixer. When you lift the whisk from the marshmallow, it should slowly stream from the whisk in a thick ribbon. Add a few drops of yellow and orange food coloring, to give the marshmallow a light orange color, and stir them in.

Pour the marshmallow into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer. Let the marshmallow sit and rest, undisturbed, at room temperature until it is completely set, about 8 hours.

When you're ready to cut the marshmallow, dust your work surface with the powdered sugar, and sprinkle a layer of powdered sugar on top of the marshmallow. Flip the marshmallow facedown onto the work surface and peel the foil or plastic wrap off the back. Dust a large chef's knife with powdered sugar and cut the marshmallow into long thin strips, cleaning the knife frequently as it gets sticky. Cut the strips of marshmallow into small squares. Toss the marshmallow squares in powdered sugar to prevent them from sticking together. Store the marshmallows in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

VARIATIONS: You can substitute other fruit purées for the passion fruit in this recipe. Mango, peach, strawberry, or raspberry (strained of seeds) all work very well and can be substituted on a 1:1 basis.



S'mores S'prises

Yield: 24 s'mores

Now you can enjoy the classic taste of s'mores, no camping trip required! Sandwich any flavor of marshmallow between two small squares of graham cracker, dunk the whole thing in chocolate, and you have a petite, portable version of the campfire favorite. These candy bites are the perfect way to use up leftover homemade marshmallows—but they're also a good excuse to make marshmallows in the first place!



7 rectangular graham cracker sheets, divided

12 ounces (336 g) dark chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

24 (1-inch, or 2.5-cm) marshmallows (about 11 ounces, or 308 g)

Crumble 1 graham cracker into small pieces and set it aside for now.

Carefully cut the remaining 6 graham crackers along the scored lines to produce small rectangles, then cut each rectangle in half to form a 1-inch (2.5-cm) square. You will end up with 48 small graham squares.

Dab a little tempered chocolate on the top and bottom of a marshmallow, and press a graham cracker square on each side, forming a sandwich. Repeat until all of the marshmallows have been sandwiched between 2 crackers.

Dip the candy in the tempered chocolate, then set it on a parchment-lined counter to firm up. While the chocolate is still wet, sprinkle the tops of the S'mores S'prises with a pinch of the reserved crushed graham cracker. Store S'mores S'prises in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Fruit and Nut Candies



Some of my earliest candy memories involve eating homemade turtles and nut clusters made from pecans grown on my grandfather's farm. I remember visiting him over the holidays and seeing the buckets of pecans waiting to be shelled by the small fingers of his grandchildren. We would use an automated nutcracker to pierce the hard outer layer, then employ a combination of homemade tools, ragged fingernails, and sore fingertips to pry the tender meat away from the shell. Shelling gallons of pecans was hard work, but there was never any question as to whether it was worth it: the large bags of fresh pecan halves lining my family's freezer throughout the year were a valuable resource and a sweet family memory rolled into one.

It should come as no surprise that I grew up to be a pecanophile and all-around nut enthusiast. I may be biased, but I think most people would agree that nuts are a natural addition to many candy recipes: they provide a much-needed crunch and a savory edge that balances the sweetness. They pair beautifully with chocolate and are equally at home nestled in smooth caramel or chewy nougat.

Of course, we can't talk about nuts without talking about nature's other great contribution to the candy world: fruit. I've never completely agreed that fruit is "nature's candy" (I like real candy too much to buy that!), but when it comes to adding flavor, nothing beats the natural sweetness of fresh and dried fruits. In this chapter I'll share a few great recipes that showcase the value and versatility of fresh fruit and nuts in candy making.

Packed with Peanuts Brittle

Yield: 2½ pounds (1135 g)

If Charles Dickens were a food writer, I think he might call peanut brittle “the best of candies, and the worst of candies.” When it is well made, peanut brittle is positively addicting, with its pockets of salty peanuts suspended in crunchy caramelized sugar, but when it is bad . . . ouch! There is not much worse than hard, sticky peanut brittle that threatens to yank out the fillings in your teeth and causes your jaw to ache.

Having tasted my share of good and bad peanut brittles, I’m convinced that the key to successful brittle is a combination of cooking the candy to a very high temperature, and then pulling it until it is so thin it shatters when you bite into it. Both of these factors are what make peanut brittle, well, *brittle*, and if you follow this advice, you too can produce a peanut brittle worthy of being called “the best of candies.”

- 12 ounces or 1⅔ cups (336 g) granulated sugar**
- 4 ounces or ½ cup (120 ml) water**
- 8 ounces or ¾ cup (224 g) light corn syrup**
- 11 ounces or 2¼ cups (308 g) roasted, salted peanuts**
- ½ ounce or 1 tablespoon (14 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature**
- ¼ ounce or 1 teaspoon (7 g) salt**
- ¼ ounce or 1½ teaspoons (7 g) baking soda**
- ⅓ ounce or 2 teaspoons (9 g) vanilla extract**

Prepare your work surface by covering it with a silicone mat or a long strip of aluminum foil sprayed very well with nonstick cooking spray.

Combine the sugar, water, and corn syrup in a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan with a heavy bottom. Place the saucepan over medium heat, and stir until the sugar dissolves. Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to remove any stray sugar crystals, then insert a candy thermometer.

Cook the candy, stirring occasionally, until it reaches 260°F (127°C). Add the peanuts, butter, and salt to the saucepan and stir well until the peanuts are coated with the sticky candy mixture. The candy will be thick and hard to stir, and you will see the temperature drop after you add the peanuts.

Continue to cook the candy, stirring frequently to prevent scorching. As it cooks, the candy will turn a deep golden brown and become fragrant with the smell of cooking peanuts and caramelizing sugar. Cook the brittle until it reaches 295°F (146°C) on the candy thermometer.

As soon as it reaches 295°F (146°C), pull the saucepan from the heat, remove the candy thermometer, and add the baking soda and vanilla. The baking soda will cause the candy to foam up, so stir the mixture carefully but vigorously until the baking soda and vanilla are completely incorporated.

Pour the candy out onto the prepared work surface and spread it into an even layer using a spoon or spatula. Let the brittle cool for a few minutes, until it is still pliable but no longer burning hot. If you have sugar gloves or food-safe latex gloves, put them on for this next step. Otherwise, spray your hands with nonstick cooking spray and proceed carefully.

Work your hands under the edges of the peanut brittle, and begin pulling it between your hands, stretching it as thin as possible while trying not to tear it. You can use a metal spatula or knife to help you lift the brittle from the work surface. Continue to gently stretch and pull the brittle into a thin layer until it is too stiff to pull.

Allow the brittle to set completely at room temperature, for about 30 minutes. Once cool, break it into small irregular pieces by hand, and store it in an airtight container or zip-top plastic bag at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

VARIATIONS: If you like your peanut brittle on the sassy side, this recipe takes well to the addition of a little spice! For a sweeter version, add 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon when you add the vanilla and baking soda. For a more savory flavor, add 1 teaspoon of ground chipotle chile powder along with the vanilla and baking soda.



STEP-BY-STEP BELOW:

- A.** Boil the sugar syrup until it reaches 260°F (127°C).
- B.** Stir in the peanuts, butter, and salt. Continue to cook, stirring frequently, until it reaches 295°F (146°C).
- C.** Add the vanilla and baking soda and stir until the brittle foams up and triples in size.
- D.** Pour the candy onto the prepared surface. Use a well-greased spatula to spread the candy as thin as possible.
- E.** Gently use your hands to pull the brittle thinner, trying not to tear it.
- F.** Once cool, break the brittle into small pieces.



A



B



C



E



F



G

Brazil Nut Boulders

Yield: 14 ounces or about 2 cups (392 g)

I call these “boulders” because they resemble nothing so much as large, craggy rocks. I challenge you to find a real rock that tastes this good, however. Large Brazil nuts are coated with a crunchy caramel and a hint of salt, then covered with several layers of semisweet chocolate and finished with a dusting of cocoa powder.

- 6½ ounces or 1¼ cup (166 g) raw Brazil nuts**
- 2 ounces or ¼ cup (60 ml) water**
- 3½ ounces or ½ cup (98 g) granulated sugar**
- ¼ teaspoon lemon juice**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ ounce or 1 tablespoon (14 g) butter**
- 8 ounces (224 g) dark chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)**
- 1 ounce or ¼ cup (28 g) unsweetened cocoa powder**
- ½ ounce or 2 tablespoons (14 g) powdered sugar**

Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C, or gas mark 4). Place the Brazil nuts on a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil, and toast them in the oven for 10 minutes, stirring twice during the toasting process so they don’t burn.

While the Brazil nuts are toasting, prepare the caramel. Combine the water, sugar, and lemon juice in a 4-quart (3.6-L) saucepan with a heavy bottom. Place the pan over medium heat, and stir until the sugar dissolves. Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming, then insert a candy thermometer.

Continue to cook the caramel without stirring until it is a golden brown color and reaches 300°F (149°C) on the thermometer, which will take about 8 to 10 minutes. When the caramel is at 300°F (149°C), remove the pan from the heat and add the hot, toasted Brazil nuts.

Stir until the nuts are coated with caramel. Add the salt and the butter and stir just until the butter coats the nuts so they can be easily separated. Pour the caramel-coated nuts back onto the baking sheet lined with foil, and working quickly, separate them so that none of the nuts are touching. Let them cool completely at room temperature.

Once cool, refrigerate the nuts briefly, for about 5 minutes, then place them in a large bowl. Pour half of the tempered chocolate over the nuts and stir until the nuts are coated with chocolate. They will first form a clump in the bowl, but as you continue stirring, they will break into individual pieces. Starting with chilled nuts helps speed this process along. Refrigerate the bowl of nuts for another 5 minutes, then pour on the rest of the tempered chocolate and stir again until the nuts are completely coated with the chocolate and are in individual pieces.

Mix together the cocoa powder and the powdered sugar in a large gallon-size (3.8-L) zip-top plastic bag. Add the chocolate-covered nuts and seal the top of the bag. Shake until all of the nuts are individually coated with cocoa. Store Brazil Nut Boulders in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a month.

VARIATIONS: Instead of Brazil nuts, you can use an equal amount of whole almonds or hazelnuts with the skins removed (see page 34). If you want to vary their appearance, you can coat the nuts in plain powdered sugar instead of the powdered sugar-cocoa mixture, if you desire.



Firecracker Pecans

Yield: 12½ ounces or about 3 cups (350 g)

I like a little heat with my sweets, so I'm always looking for ways to sneak some spice into my candies. These crunchy candied pecans have plenty of sweetness from brown sugar and honey, but the sugar is balanced by cinnamon, cayenne pepper, and tangy lime zest. They're so flavorful they make a perfect snack by themselves, but they can also be used in place of plain pecans in other baking and candy recipes, or added to salads or side dishes for a hint of flavor and crunch.

10 ounces or 2½ cups (280 g) raw pecan halves

1 ounce or 2 tablespoons (28 g) butter

2 ounces or ¼ cup (56 g) packed brown sugar

1½ ounces or 2 tablespoons (42 g) honey

¼ ounce or 1½ teaspoons (7 g) salt

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1½ teaspoons lime zest (from 1 medium lime)

Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C, or gas mark 4). Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray. Arrange the pecan halves on the baking sheet and toast them for 10 minutes, stirring them twice during the baking process so they don't burn.

While the pecans are toasting, prepare the coating. Place the butter in a large microwave-safe bowl and heat it in the microwave for 30 seconds until it is melted. Add the brown sugar, honey, salt, cinnamon, cayenne pepper, and lime zest to the butter, and whisk everything together until you have a smooth, thick paste.

Once the nuts are toasted, remove them from the oven and carefully pour the hot nuts into the bowl with the coating. The heat from the pecans will cause the coating to sizzle and liquefy. Stir until all of the nuts are coated, then pour them back onto the foil-lined baking sheet and spread them into an even layer.

Return the baking sheet to the oven and bake the pecans for another 10 minutes, stirring twice during the baking process. The coating will bubble up around the nuts, so be sure to stir them well to redistribute the sweet and spicy seasonings. After 10 minutes, remove the pecans from the oven and allow them to cool on the baking sheet.

Once cool, break apart any clumps of nuts and store them in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a month.

VARIATION: These flavorful, crunchy nuts are practically begging to be paired with chocolate. To make quick and easy nut clusters, coarsely chop 6 ounces (168 g) of Firecracker Pecans to yield about 1 cup of nuts. Mix them with 10 ounces (280 g) of tempered semisweet chocolate (see page 26) and stir until they're coated with chocolate. Drop small spoonfuls of the chocolate-nut mixture onto a baking sheet lined with foil, and let them set at room temperature before enjoying them.



Pistachio Marzipan Squares

Yield: 11 ounces (308 g) pistachio marzipan filling, or about 25 candies

Marzipan is most commonly made of almonds, but this classic nut paste can actually be made with almost any nut. I love to make my marzipan with pistachios—in addition to giving the candy a beautiful green color, pistachios provide an unmistakable nuttiness and slightly sweet flavor to these chocolate-dipped squares.

Although Pistachio Marzipan Squares are a treat in and of themselves, don't be afraid to play around with the marzipan in the kitchen. In Europe it is not uncommon to place a thin layer of pistachio marzipan in between cake layers, or add it to tarts and other baked goods. Once you taste how good this marzipan is, you might be inspired to start sneaking it into desserts of your own!

5 ounces or 1 generous cup (140 g) pistachios (see Note below)

5 ounces or 1¼ cups (140 g) powdered sugar, divided, plus extra for dusting

⅛ teaspoon salt

⁹/₁₀ ounce or 2 tablespoons (25 g) lightly whisked egg whites, plus more if needed, divided

12 ounces (336 g) dark chocolate, melted and tempered (see page 26)

1¼ ounces or ¼ cup (35 g) coarsely chopped pistachios, for decorating (optional)

Combine the pistachios and 2 tablespoons (14 g) of the powdered sugar in the bowl of a food processor. Process the nuts and sugar together until the pistachios are very finely ground.

Add the remaining 1 cup 2 tablespoons (126 g) powdered sugar and the salt, and process the mixture until the sugar is incorporated and you have a very fine powder in the bowl of your food processor.

Add 1 tablespoon (12 g) of egg whites and pulse the processor until the egg whites are incorporated. The marzipan should be slightly moist but crumbly. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon (12 g) egg whites and process in 5-second spurts until the marzipan starts to clump together around the blade of the processor. If the marzipan doesn't come together and still seems crumbly and dry, add 1 teaspoon egg whites and process until it comes together. Try to add as little extra liquid as possible to get a workable texture to your nut paste.

If you have the time, form the marzipan into a disk, wrap it tightly in plastic wrap, and let it rest overnight. This brief curing period is optional but it does make the marzipan easier to work with.

When you are ready to form and dip the marzipan squares, sprinkle your work surface with a light coating of powdered sugar. Roll out the marzipan until it is a square about ½ inch (1.3 cm) thick. (This thickness can be adjusted to suit your taste.) Cut the marzipan into small 1-inch (2.5-cm) squares.

Place a silicone mat or piece of parchment paper nearby. Dip each square of marzipan into the tempered chocolate, then place it on the silicone mat or parchment. While the chocolate is still wet, sprinkle the tops of the chocolates with a pinch of chopped pistachios, if desired. Repeat until all of the pistachio squares are dipped.

Allow the chocolate to set at room temperature before serving. Store Pistachio Marzipan Squares in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

NOTE: Depending on your preference, you can use either toasted or raw pistachios in this recipe. Raw pistachios can be difficult to find, but they give the marzipan a gorgeous vibrant green color and fresh, nutty taste. Toasted pistachios



produce a marzipan that is more of a muddy green, but they bring a deeper flavor to the nut paste. Both will work in this recipe, so go with your taste and color preference.

VARIATIONS: Pistachios and rose water are a common pairing in Persian desserts, and the subtle floral taste of rose water is a welcome exotic touch in this marzipan recipe. To flavor your pistachio marzipan, reduce the egg whites by 1 teaspoon and add 1 teaspoon of rose water. Taste the marzipan after blending everything together, and if you would like a stronger flavor, add up to 1 more teaspoon of rose water. Alternatively, if you have food-grade rose oil, use the full amount of egg whites and add just a drop or two of rose oil—it is much stronger than rose water, so you will only need a tiny amount.

You can also add chunks of nuts or fruits to your marzipan. Knead in approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (50 to 75 g) of your favorite chopped nuts or dried fruit—pistachios, dried sour cherries, or dried cranberries all work well. Freeze-dried strawberries are another fun addition. These crunchy berry slices can be found online or in gourmet grocery stores, and they add a fresh berry taste and crispy texture to the marzipan. Knead in $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce, or approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (19 g), coarsely chopped freeze-dried strawberries per batch of pistachio marzipan.

Glazed Fruit

Yield: 1 pound (454 g)

It's hard to improve upon perfectly ripe and juicy fruit—but that doesn't mean we can't try! In this recipe for glazed fruit, an assortment of fresh fruit is covered with a shiny candy shell. You can enjoy this fruit on its own, or use it as an edible decoration for cakes, tarts, or other pastries.

This recipe works best with fruit that is self-contained, like strawberries, grapes, mandarin orange segments, or kumquats. You can use cut sections of fruit like apples or pears, but the moisture on the cut sides will quickly cause the crunchy glaze to liquefy. If you do want to use cut fruit, make the candy immediately before you plan to serve it.



1 pound (454 g) fresh fruit (see headnote)
8 ounces or 1 cup (235 ml) water
14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g) granulated sugar
5½ ounces or ½ cup (154 g) light corn syrup

Cover a baking sheet with a silicone mat or line it with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.

Wash the fruit in cool water and pat it dry carefully and thoroughly.

Combine the water, sugar, and corn syrup in a medium saucepan. Place the saucepan over medium-high heat, and stir until the sugar dissolves. Brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to remove any sugar crystals, and bring the mixture to a boil. Insert a candy thermometer and continue to cook the sugar mixture without stirring until the thermometer reads 300°F (149°C), which will take between 15 and 20 minutes.

Once the candy reaches 300°F (149°C), remove the pan from the heat. Let it sit at room temperature for a few minutes, until bubbles stop forming on the surface.

To dip the fruit, you can either grip it by the stem, in the case of strawberries or grapes, or skewer the top with a toothpick. Carefully lower the fruit into the sugar syrup until it is almost completely submerged. Be very careful not to touch the syrup with your hands, because it is very hot and can cause serious burns. Remove the fruit from the syrup, letting the excess drip back into the saucepan. Place the fruit on the prepared baking sheet, and repeat the dipping process until all of the fruit is covered with a shiny candy shell. If the syrup starts to get too thick to dip, return the saucepan to the heat briefly, just to warm it up until it is again liquid.

Let the candy set completely at room temperature. This candy does not keep well, and for the best appearance and taste, the fruit should be enjoyed within a few hours of making it.

VARIATIONS: If you want to add a bit more flavor to the crunchy candy shell, add 1 teaspoon of a flavoring like vanilla, almond, orange, or lemon extract. Add the extract after the syrup has been cooked and you've removed the pan from the heat. Stir well to blend it into the syrup, then proceed with the recipe as written.

Another interesting variation is to add balsamic vinegar to the candy syrup: replace ¼ cup (60 ml) of water with ¼ cup (60 ml) of balsamic vinegar when you first mix all of the ingredients together in the saucepan. This variation is especially good when you make this recipe with strawberries—the sweet-tart flavor of the balsamic vinegar pairs nicely with fresh, juicy berries.

Candied Citrus Peel

Yield: 10 ounces or about 2 cups (280 g)

If the first thing you think of when you hear the words “candied citrus peel” is your grandmother’s terrifying holiday fruitcake, you are in for a surprising treat. This candy is indeed a product of an earlier time, when resources were scarce and cooks had to find ingenious ways of using ingredients, like citrus rinds, that would otherwise go to waste in the kitchen. However, don’t let its old-fashioned origins and reputation fool you—candied citrus peel is so much more than an ingredient used to make scary desserts!

Candied peel may be best known as a fruitcake accomplice, but in truth it is an incredibly versatile ingredient that still has value in the modern kitchen. This recipe produces a candied citrus peel that is soft and chewy, with a vibrant fruit taste and an irresistible blend of sweet and sour flavors. You can add a handful of chopped peel to your favorite muffin or quick bread recipe, or enjoy it rolled in sugar for a quick bite-size treat. It also pairs marvelously with chocolate, so consider keeping a stash on hand in the kitchen to add to truffles, barks, or clusters.

4 large oranges (or 2 large grapefruit or 6 large lemons)

32 ounces or 4 cups (940 ml) water

28 ounces or 4 cups (784 g) granulated sugar, plus more for dredging (optional)

2¾ ounces or ¼ cup (77 g) light corn syrup

Peel the citrus fruit by cutting the rind into quarters, cutting through the peel but not the flesh of the fruit. Carefully pull the quarters of rind away from the fruit, trying not to tear it. Cut the quarters into strips between ¼ inch and ½ inch (6 mm and 1.3 cm) wide. If you are using fruit with a very thick skin, use a small sharp paring knife to slice away some of the bitter white pith underneath until your rind is about ¼ inch (6 mm) thick. This step is optional but will make your finished product sweeter.

Place the strips of peel in a saucepan and cover them with a few inches of cold water. Put the pan over medium-high heat and bring the water to a boil. Drain the pot, then place the peel back in the saucepan and repeat the boiling and draining procedure twice more. This process helps remove much of the bitterness from the peels.

Once the peels have been boiled and drained three times, combine the 32 ounces or 4 cups (940 ml) water, the granulated sugar, and the corn syrup in a large 6- to 8-quart (5.4- to 7.2-L) pot, and stir everything together. Place the pot over medium heat and bring it to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Wipe down the sides of the pot with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. After the mixture has come to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low and add the peels.

Cook the peels at a bare simmer until they are translucent, about 60 minutes. Be careful not to let the peels come to a boil, because boiling them can make them leathery and tough. Stir the peels several times during the simmering process to ensure they are all cooking evenly.

Once the peels are tender and translucent, remove the pot from the heat and allow it to cool completely at room temperature. The candied citrus peel can be stored packed in its cooking syrup in an airtight container in the refrigerator. This method is best if you want to keep the peels moist and tender to use in cooking recipes.



To enjoy your citrus peels plain, as candy, remove the peels from the syrup and let them dry on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Dredge the peels in granulated sugar and replace them on the wire rack. Let them dry overnight at room temperature, until they have a crisp outer shell but are still soft inside. The peels can now be enjoyed plain, dipped in chocolate, or stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

VARIATIONS: For chocolate-dipped candied peel, temper 12 ounces (336 g) of chocolate (see page 26). Because the peel is already quite sweet, I recommend using dark chocolate, but milk chocolate will also work. If you are dipping peel that has been coated in granulated sugar, hold the peel by one end and dip it until three-quarters of the peel is covered with chocolate, leaving 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm) uncovered at the end. Set the peel on a silicone mat or length of aluminum foil, and repeat until all of the peel is dipped.

If you are dipping peel that has been stored in sugar syrup and not coated in sugar, drain it, pat it dry, and place it on a wire screen in a 200°F (93°C) oven for 30 minutes to remove excess moisture that might cause the chocolate to seize. Once cool and dry, dip the peel in the chocolate using the method above, or if you'd like to coat the entire length of peel, use dipping tools or a fork to dunk the peel in chocolate to cover it completely.

Strawberry-Mint Pâte de Fruits

Yield: 1½ pounds (681 g)

If the thought of making a French candy called *pâte de fruits* is intimidating to you, perhaps it will help to think of their literal English translation instead: “fruit paste.” Or perhaps that doesn’t sound so appetizing either. Let’s just agree that a candy by any other name can taste as sweet, and concentrate on the flavor of these fruit jellies instead.

These *pâte de fruits* are made by cooking strawberry purée with sugar and a bit of pectin until the purée becomes very thick, almost like a condensed jam. After the candy sets it is cut into small pieces and rolled in granulated sugar. The pectin gives the candies a lovely soft and chewy texture, while the hint of fresh mint in the strawberry purée adds an herbaceous note to the bright berry flavor.

2 pounds (908 g) fresh or frozen strawberries, best quality

About 25 large fresh mint leaves

19¾ ounces or 2¾ cups (553 g) granulated sugar, divided, plus 7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g), for dredging

½ ounce or 2 tablespoons (14 g) Pomona’s Universal Pectin (see Note on page 136)

1 teaspoon calcium water (see Note on page 136)

3½ ounces or scant ½ cup (98 g) light corn syrup

½ ounce or 1 tablespoon (15 ml) fresh lemon juice

½ teaspoon citric acid (optional)

Place a small plate in the freezer. Spray an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-cm) pan with nonstick cooking spray, then line the pan with a layer of plastic wrap, pressing it firmly into the corners and extending it over the sides. The cooking spray will help the plastic wrap stick to the pan. Set the pan aside for now.

If you are using fresh strawberries, wash and hull the berries. If you are using frozen strawberries, place them in a saucepan over low heat and gently warm them, stirring occasionally, until they are defrosted and giving off juice.

Place the mint leaves in the bowl of a food processor and process until they are finely chopped. Add the strawberries to the food processor and blend until the strawberries are completely liquefied.

Pour the strawberry purée through a fine-mesh strainer to remove the seeds and large flecks of mint leaves. Measure out 18 ounces or about 2½ cups (504 g) of purée. Save any extra purée for another use.

In a small bowl, whisk together 1¾ ounces or about ¼ cup (49 g) of the granulated sugar and the pectin. Make sure that the remaining quantity of sugar, the calcium water, the corn syrup, and the lemon juice are all prepared and within easy reach.

Pour the fruit purée into a 6-quart (5.4-L) saucepan, whisk in the calcium water, and place the pan over medium heat. Bring the fruit purée to a boil, and once it is bubbling, sprinkle the sugar-pectin mixture over the top and whisk it in.

Allow the mixture to come to a boil once more. Add the remaining 18 ounces or 2½ cups (504 g) sugar in 4 batches, whisking it well and allowing the purée to come back to a boil in between each addition. As you whisk the purée, occasionally scrape the bottom of the pan with a heat-safe spatula to prevent scorching.

After the sugar is added, add the corn syrup, bring the mixture back up to a slow boil, and continue whisking and scraping the bottom of the pan with the spatula. The purée should be thick and viscous, with heavy bubbles that slowly pop. After 5 minutes of boiling and stirring, take the plate from the freezer and spoon a small amount of purée onto it. Let it sit for 1 minute, and then check the

(continued on page 136)



Strawberry-Mint Pâte de Fruits (continued)

texture. The purée should be firm enough to peel off the plate, yet still soft and chewy. If the purée is too loose or sticky, cook it for another 2 to 3 minutes, then test the texture on the plate again. The total cooking time should only be 5 to 10 minutes after all of the sugar has been added.

Once the purée is properly jelled, remove the pan from the heat and add the lemon juice, whisking for 30 seconds to incorporate it. Pour the pâte de fruit into the prepared pan and gently shake the pan to smooth it into an even layer. Allow it to sit and firm up at room temperature, for about 2 hours, or in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Once firm, remove the pâte de fruit from the pan and use a large sharp chef's knife dipped in water to cut it into small squares or rectangles.

To finish the pâte de fruits, mix together the 7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar for dredging and the citric acid, if you're using it. The citric acid is optional but it adds a tart flavor that nicely counteracts the sweetness of the sugar coating. Roll the pieces of pâte de fruit in the sugar until they are coated on all sides. If you are storing the pâte de fruits instead of serving them immediately, the sugar will eventually liquefy and you will want to re-roll them in sugar just before serving. Store Strawberry-Mint Pâte de Fruits in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

NOTE: This recipe calls for Pomona's Universal Pectin, which can be found online and in the baking section of many health food stores. Unlike most commonly available pectin formulas, it is a "low-sugar" pectin, meaning that it does not require large amounts of sugar to jell properly. Instead, it jells by reacting with calcium, which is why the recipe calls for a small amount of calcium water. To make the calcium water, follow the instructions on the package and mix ½ teaspoon of the provided calcium powder with ½ cup (120 ml) of water. After using 1 teaspoon calcium water in this recipe, the remainder of the water can be stored in the refrigerator for several months.

Although there is nothing "low-sugar" about this recipe, I prefer Pomona's pectin because it produces consistent results with a range of different fruit purées, regardless of the sugar or acid content of the purée. It also does not require a long boiling time, so the fruit is cooked for a shorter period and retains a fresher flavor and brighter color. Substituting other brands of pectin may not produce a satisfactory taste or texture.

VARIATIONS: Fresh mint isn't the only herb that you can use in this recipe. Strawberry also pairs well with basil, so if you'd like, you can substitute fresh basil leaves for the mint in this recipe. If you're more of a traditionalist you can also omit the herbs entirely and enjoy a purely strawberry-flavored candy.

You can also use other fruits in place of strawberry by substituting an equal amount of fruit purée by weight. Common pâte de fruit flavors include raspberry, mango, peach, and apricot, but feel free to get creative and try mixing and matching your favorite fruits!

Caramel-Covered Pears

Yield: 6 pears

When it comes to pairing fruit and caramel, apples seem to have a monopoly on the market. There's nothing wrong with a classic caramel apple, but when given the choice, I choose caramel-covered pears every time. Ripe, juicy pears bring a refreshingly different taste and texture to this traditional candy, and I think their va-va-voom shape adds more visual appeal as well.

Using store-bought soft caramels makes this recipe a breeze, but if you have the time, consider using one of the caramel recipes in this book instead. Sea Salt Caramels (page 66) or Autumn Caramels (page 62) would both be delicious in this recipe.

**6 large pears, approximately
7 ounces (196 g) each**

**14 ounces (392 g) soft caramels,
store-bought or homemade**

**1¼ ounces or 2 tablespoons (30 ml)
heavy cream**

**10 ounces (280 g) dark chocolate,
melted and tempered
(see page 26)**

**2½ ounces or ½ cup (70 g) salted
peanuts, coarsely chopped**



Wash the pears and carefully and thoroughly pat them dry. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper or aluminum foil and spray the surface with nonstick cooking spray.

If you are using store-bought caramels, remove the wrappers. Place the caramels in a medium microwave-safe bowl along with the cream. Heat the caramel mixture in the microwave, stirring after every 30 seconds to prevent overheating. Continue to heat and stir the mixture until it is smooth, liquid, and free of lumps.

Hold a pear by the stem and dip it into the caramel until only 1 inch (2.5 cm) of the pear is uncovered at the top. If your bowl is too shallow to dip the pear completely, use a spoon to scoop the caramel and pour it over the sides of the pear. Hold the pear above the caramel bowl to let the excess drip down. Scrape the bottom of the pear against the lip of the bowl to remove any remaining excess caramel, then place the pear on the prepared baking sheet. Repeat until all of the pears are dipped in caramel. Refrigerate the tray to set the caramel layer, for about 30 minutes.

Once the caramel is firm, dip the pears once again, this time in the tempered chocolate. You can cover the caramel completely with chocolate, or leave a 1-inch (2.5-cm) margin of caramel showing at the top. Let the excess chocolate drip back into the bowl, and then while the chocolate is still wet, press the bottom of the pear into a bowl of chopped peanuts.

Set the pear back down on the baking sheet and repeat until all of the pears are dipped in chocolate and nuts. Let the chocolate set completely at room temperature. If you are not serving the Caramel-Covered Pears within an hour, wrap them individually in plastic wrap and refrigerate them. Well-wrapped pears can be kept in the refrigerator for up to a week. For the best taste and texture, allow them to sit at room temperature for 20 minutes before serving.





Part III:

DECORATION & PRESENTATION

Chapter 12: Finishing Techniques and Candy Decorations

Finishing Techniques and Candy Decorations



There is a saying in the culinary world that “you eat with your eyes.” Visual presentation has a powerful impact when it comes to the food we choose to consume. Even the most delicious caramel will be passed over if it is dipped in gray, streaky bloomed chocolate, while a mediocre truffle is easily forgiven if it is covered with glossy chocolate and a picture-perfect pinch of nuts on top. Of course, good flavor should always be the primary goal of candy making, but once you have mastered a recipe’s technique, the next step should be to present the candy as beautifully as possible.

This chapter will introduce you to a few common tools and techniques that will help take your candies from the everyday to the extraordinary. You will learn fun tricks like how to apply edible gold leaf, paint your chocolates with luster dust, and use chocolate transfer sheets. You will also use skills learned in previous chapters, like tempering chocolate and caramelizing sugar, to craft beautiful edible garnishes for your homemade desserts.

* Five Easy Truffle Decorations *

Truffle decorations don’t have to be limited to a roll in cocoa powder or a sprinkle of chopped nuts on top. These five simple decorating ideas require only a little time and effort, but they give your truffles a big personality. For instructions on how to dip truffles and prepare them for decorating, see page 90-91.

.... SPIKED TRUFFLES

Spiked truffles have an unexpected, refreshingly modern look. To finish your truffles this way, place a freshly dipped truffle on a cooling rack with a close-spaced wire grid pattern. Use a fork or dipping tools to roll the wet truffle around in circles on top of the rack. As the chocolate starts to set, some of it will stick to the rack, resulting in a rough, spiked surface all over the truffle. Roll it until it is evenly spiked on all sides, then transfer it to a sheet of parchment paper to set completely while you roll and spike other truffles. (A)

.... DIPPING TOOL DECORATIONS

Dipping tools are good for more than just dipping truffles—they can also be used to create designs on top of the dipped chocolates. Touch the top of a freshly dipped truffle with the tines of a dipping tool to create swirls or lines on your truffles. (B, C)

.... CHOCOLATE SWIRLS

To create fanciful swirls on top of your truffles, temper chocolate or melt candy coating in a contrasting color. Dip a fork into the melted chocolate and quickly flick it in circles over the truffles. Vary your movements and direction so that the pattern is random and unpredictable. (D)



A



B



C



D



E



F

A. Spiked Truffles

B + C. Dipping Tool Decorations

D. Chocolate Swirls

E. Chocolate Stripes

F. Chocolate Designs

.... CHOCOLATE STRIPES

Stripes are a clean and classic truffle decoration. To make stripes, pour tempered chocolate or melted candy coating into a paper cone or a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip. Gently squeeze the bag to release the chocolate while quickly moving the bag back and forth over the truffles. Let the chocolate set, then cut off any stray lines that have formed near the bottom of the truffle with a paring knife. **(E)**

.... CHOCOLATE DESIGNS

Don't limit yourself to stripes or swirls—use your truffles as a blank canvas and draw shapes, letters, or words on top. Pour tempered chocolate or melted candy coating into a paper cone or a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip, and practice a few times on parchment before you attempt drawing on top of a truffle, to make sure the chocolate flows well and you are comfortable with your design. **(F)**

* Decorating Dusts *

If you want to create beautiful sparkling candies with metallic or pearlescent finishes, decorating dusts are your new best friend. **(A)** These edible dusts come in small bottles and can be brushed on finished candies with a dry brush or mixed with cocoa butter and painted on. There are many different varieties of decorating dust, but here are the most common:

Disco dust: has large, metallic grains, similar in appearance to glitter.

Luster dust: has a vibrant shine and comes in a wide variety of colors. Because it provides a good balance of shine and strong color, luster dust is the most common kind of decorating dust used to finish candies.

Sparkle dust: has larger grains than luster dust, and provides an iridescent shine and subtle color.

Pearl dust: is practically translucent, but can impart a small amount of color. It is generally used to provide a pearlescent finish.

Petal dust: is a matte powder, without any shine. It provides deep color and is most often used to paint realistic flowers.



A. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: disco dust, luster dust, sparkle dust, pearl dust, petal dust
B + C. Applying Dry Decoration Dust
D, E, F. Painting with Decorating Dust

.... APPLYING DRY DECORATING DUST

To apply decorating dust to your candies, use a clean, dry paintbrush. Decorating dust does not mix well with water and will clump together if it gets wet. Dip the brush in the dust and gently apply a thin, even layer to the top of your candy. Decorating dust can be used on chocolates, truffles, hard candies, or any other confection that is smooth and dry. **(B)**

Decorating dust will rub off of the candy, so be careful when you handle, store, and package the finished candies. If any dust rubs off, it can easily be reapplied with a dry brush. **(C)**

.... PAINTING WITH DECORATING DUST

In cake decorating, decorating dust is often mixed with alcohol to form a thin, smooth liquid that can be easily used for painting. Unfortunately, this method doesn't work on chocolates, but there is an alternative. If you mix melted cocoa butter and luster dust, you can form a colorful, shiny, chocolate-friendly paint. This method is best for adding small details to your candies, if you want to show texture or visible brushstrokes, or if you need the decorations to be more durable.

To paint with luster dust, melt a small amount of cocoa butter. Stir in the luster dust a little bit at a time, stopping to check the color and consistency periodically until the color is strong enough. **(D)**

Use a small paintbrush to apply the colored cocoa butter to dry, smooth candies or chocolates. The cocoa butter will gradually start to set at room temperature, so periodically warm it up in the microwave until it is fluid again. **(E)**

When your chocolates are complete, let the cocoa butter dry completely. Because the cocoa butter helps seal in the color, this painting method is less delicate and prone to scratching than dry-brushed luster dust, but you should still take care when handling and storing painted candies. **(F)**



* Edible Gold Leaf *

Edible gold leaf adds an authentic metallic sheen that is unmatched by any other product. As its name suggests, it is made from genuine gold, and is sold in either sheets or flakes. The flakes are convenient for sprinkling on top of candies, but the sheets offer more decorating versatility. When selecting gold leaf, make sure that it is between 22 and 24 karats—any less and it might contain impurities that make it unsafe to consume.

Gold leaf is extremely delicate and is easily torn or wrinkled. When handling gold leaf, wear cotton gloves if possible, and avoid touching it with your bare hands, as it will stick to the oil on your fingers. Try not to breathe heavily or move suddenly, because even a stray gust of wind can blow the gold leaf away or cause it to crumple. In addition to gold leaf, you will need a sharp paring knife or razor blade and a soft, dry paintbrush. **(A)**

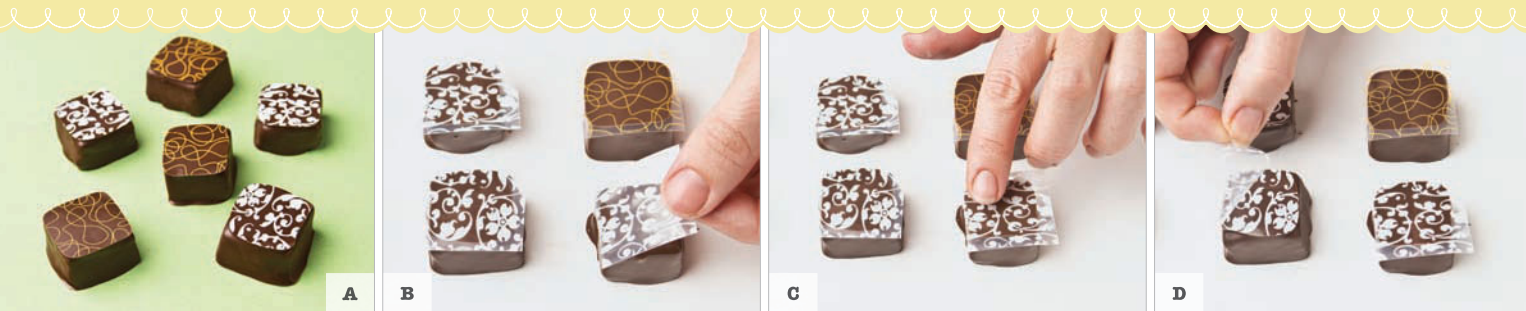
Use the knife or razor blade to cut away a small portion of the gold leaf. Pick it up using the tip of your blade, and gently lift it up from the rest of the gold leaf. **(B)**

Position the gold leaf over the candy and set it down so that it attaches to the top of the candy and detaches from the blade. **(C)**

Use the paintbrush to carefully press down on the gold leaf and smooth it out, creating an even gold patch on the candy. **(D)**

If desired, you can repeat this process to add more gold leaf decorations to the top of your candy. If you want to cover the entire candy with gold leaf, you can either use a much larger patch of gold leaf initially or overlap many individual pieces of gold leaf to make a seamless gold coating. **(E)**

Once your gold leaf candies are finished, handle them carefully, because the gold leaf can easily be rubbed or scratched off the surface. **(F)**



* Chocolate Transfer Sheets *

Chocolate transfer sheets are thin sheets of acetate covered with designs made from cocoa butter. When the sheets come into contact with melted chocolate, the cocoa butter pattern transfers to the chocolate's surface, resulting in beautiful, polished chocolate decorations. **(A)**

To decorate your chocolates with transfer sheets, you need to use chocolate candies with a flat surface. Square truffles or chocolate-dipped caramels are ideal for this purpose. Cut the transfer sheets into small squares that are slightly larger than the dipped candies. Dip your candies following the instructions on page 91, and while the chocolate is still wet, gently place a transfer sheet square on the candy. Make sure the rough side, with the cocoa powder design, is facedown on the chocolate. **(B)**

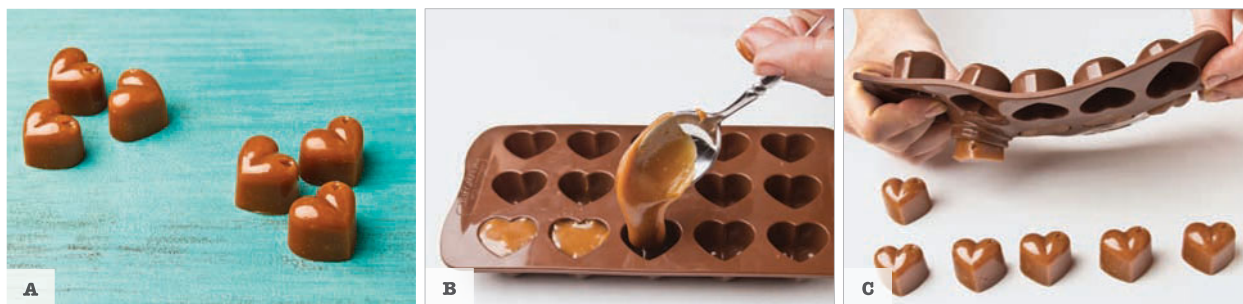
Use your finger or a small offset spatula to smooth the transfer sheet onto the top of the chocolate. Be sure to get all the way to the edges and corners. **(C)**

Let the chocolate set completely at room temperature. Once set, grasp the edge of the transfer sheet and carefully peel it back, leaving an elegant pattern on your candies. **(D)**

* Molded Caramels *

Caramels are most typically cut into squares or rectangles, but that doesn't mean you can't have some fun with this classic candy! Instead of sticking with staid shapes, use a candy mold to form your caramels and give them a whimsical touch. **(A)**

To create caramel shapes, you will need a silicone mold—regular plastic candy molds are not flexible enough to release the caramels. You can use a mold specifically designed for chocolate and candy making, or you can use a silicone ice cube tray. Ice cube trays are a fraction of the price of traditional silicone molds, they come in fun shapes, and they work just as well as the specialty chocolate molds.



Use one of the caramel recipes in chapter 5. A caramel that is cooked to a firm consistency is easier to mold than a soft caramel. After the caramel is cooked but while it is still liquid, pour or spoon the caramel into the cavities of your mold. **(B)**

Let the caramels cool to room temperature, then refrigerate the mold until the caramels are completely set and firm. Once set, turn the mold upside down and press the caramels out through the back of the mold. Dip them in chocolate or individually wrap and refrigerate them so that they hold their shape. **(C)**

* Marshmallow Rosettes *

Light and fluffy marshmallows look extra sweet when they're piped into rosette shapes with colorful swirls. This is a fun way to dress up your marshmallows for gifting and special occasions like showers and parties. **(A)**

Fit a pastry bag with a large star tip with an opening is at least $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2 cm) wide. To create stripes, take a clean paintbrush and paint lines of gel food coloring up the inside of the bag. Fill the bag with freshly made marshmallow, using one of the recipes from chapter 10. Twist the bag closed at the top. **(B)**

Cover a baking sheet with parchment, and sprinkle a layer of granulated sugar onto the parchment. Holding the bag upright, squeeze the pastry bag to press the marshmallow out onto the baking sheet, and as it comes out, move the bag in a circle to make a rosette shape. Once you've completed a circle, stop squeezing and lift the bag up, to break off the tip of the rosette. **(C)**

While the marshmallow rosettes are still wet, sprinkle the tops with a light coating of granulated sugar. Let the marshmallows set completely at room temperature, for at least 6 hours or overnight. Once set, store the rosettes in an airtight container at room temperature between layers of waxed paper. **(D)**





* Custom Candy Molds *

Candy molds are convenient, but they can be limiting. It can be hard to find molds in your desired shapes or sizes, and sometimes you might want to mold candies, like marshmallows or fondant, that are difficult to shape using traditional candy or chocolate molds. The solution to this problem is to make your own custom molds out of cornstarch.

This section shows how to make marshmallow eggs in a cornstarch mold, but cornstarch molds don't have to be limited to marshmallows—they can also be used to mold hard candies, gumdrops, jelly candies, and melted fondant. **(A)**

To make a cornstarch mold, sift cornstarch into a 9 x 13-inch (23 x 33-cm) pan or a half-sheet pan. The choice of pan depends on how many cavities you need and how deep your cavities will be. Plan on using about 4 to 5 pounds (1.8 to 2.3 kg) of cornstarch for a 9 x 13-inch (23 x 33-cm) pan or a half-sheet pan. **(B)**

Use a ruler or straightedge to level the top of the cornstarch until it is completely even and smooth. **(C)**

Press your shape of choice into the cornstarch. Virtually anything can be used to create these molds—a kitchen tool, like a utensil or the bottom of a cup or bowl, a household object, a toy, or a piece of jewelry can all produce an interesting shape. Press down firmly to make a solid impression, and be sure to leave enough space between the shapes so that the cornstarch does not collapse in on itself. **(D)**

Pipe or pour your candy into the cavities. Hard candies and liquid fondant can be poured into the holes, while marshmallows should be carefully piped in to fill up all available space. **(E)**

Sift a light layer of cornstarch on top of the candy, and let it set completely at room temperature. **(F)**

Once the candy is set, gently remove the pieces from the cornstarch. Use a pastry brush to brush off the excess cornstarch. The cornstarch from the mold can be reused to make more molds. **(G)**

Chocolate Bowls

Yield: 16 chocolate bowls

The only thing better than a bowl of dessert is an entirely edible, entirely delicious chocolate bowl of dessert! Fill these sweet bowls with mousse, whipped cream, ice cream, or any other soft dessert that pairs well with chocolate. These bowls can also be used as fancy serving bowls to display fruit, nuts, or your favorite candies.

1 pound (454 g) chocolate, melted, tempered (see page 26)

16 small, round water balloons



Inflate the small, round water balloons. Do not over-inflate—they should remain flexible and have some “give” to them. Dip the bottom of a balloon into the chocolate until it is the height you desire. Spin the balloon around in the chocolate to make sure it is the same height on all sides. Gently place the balloon down on a piece of parchment, holding it upright until the chocolate forms a small foot and can stand on its own without tipping over. Let the chocolate set completely at room temperature.

To remove the balloon from the chocolate bowl, carefully squeeze the sides of the balloon to break the seal all the way around the bowl. Pinch the top of the balloon under the knot, and snip a hole in the knot above your fingers. Keep your fingers tightly closed so that you control the flow of air out of the balloon.

Slowly relax your grip, letting the air out of the balloon gradually. If you do this too fast, the chocolate can crack or the balloon will become stuck to the sides of the bowl. If the balloon deflates slowly, it will gently peel itself from the inside of the chocolate bowl. Once the balloon is completely deflated, carefully peel it from the bottom of the chocolate bowl.

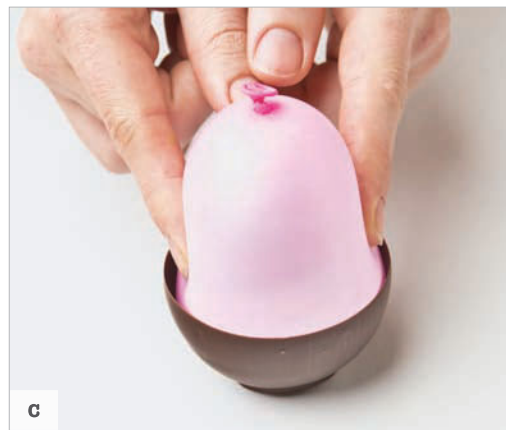
Store these Chocolate Bowls in an airtight container at cool room temperature for up to a month.



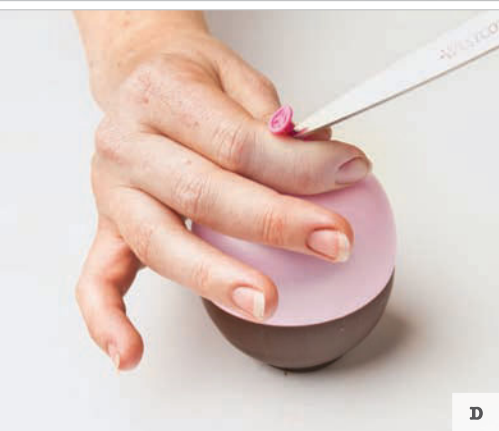
A



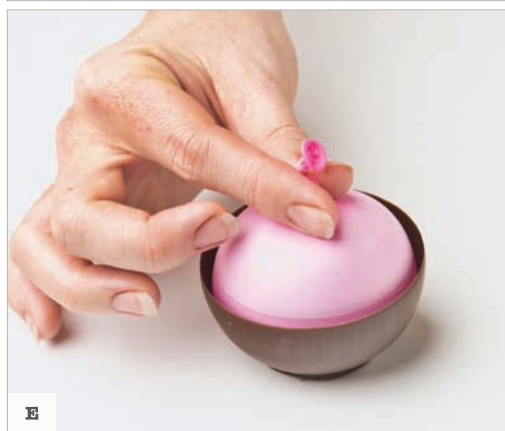
B



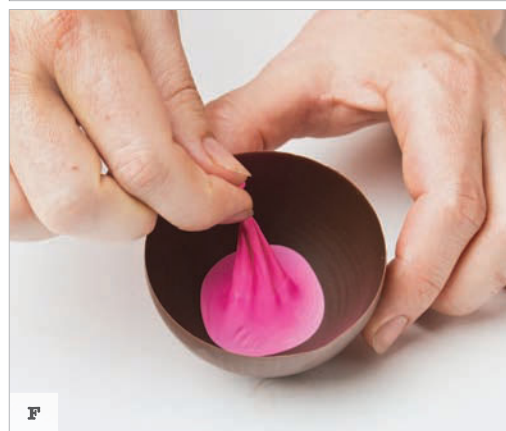
C



D



E



F

- A.** Dip the bottom of the balloons in the tempered chocolate.
- B.** Gently place the balloons on parchment to set the chocolate.
- C.** Carefully squeeze the sides of the balloons to break the seal around the bowl.
- D.** Grip the balloon at the top and cut a small hole above your fingers.
- E.** Slowly release the air from the balloon.
- F.** Peel the balloon from the bottom of the bowl.

Spun Sugar

In this classic candy decoration, gossamer-thin strands of sugar are artfully spun and woven into crowns, nests, and other pastry adornments. Specialty tools are available for making spun sugar, but you don't need to buy an expensive instrument to successfully spin sugar. You can fashion your own sugar spinner by cutting the round ends off of a wire whisk, or even using a regular fork.

2 ounces or ¼ cup (60 ml) water

2¾ ounces or ¼ cup (77 g) light corn syrup

14 ounces or 2 cups (392 g) granulated sugar

Ice

In a 2-quart (1.8-L) saucepan, combine the water, corn syrup, and granulated sugar, and place the pan over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush. Bring the syrup to a boil, and once boiling, insert a candy thermometer.

Continue to cook the candy, without stirring, until it reaches 310°F (154°C) on the candy thermometer. While the candy cooks, combine the ice and some cold water in a bowl to form an ice bath, and arrange several saucepan handles, dowels, or rolling pins over a countertop covered with parchment paper.

Once the sugar reaches 310°F (154°C), remove the pan from the heat and dunk the bottom of the pan in the bowl of ice water to stop it from cooking. Remove the pan from the ice water and let it cool at room temperature for several minutes, until it has thickened enough to form a thin strand of sugar.

Dip a fork or wire whisk with the ends cut off into the cooked sugar, and, holding it 12 inches (30 cm) above the countertop, flick it quickly back and forth over the saucepan handles. Continue to dip and flick the whisk until you have as much spun sugar as you need.

Gently gather it together in your hands. You can keep it one long strand, divide it into smaller portions and fashion it into a ring, or roll it over your fingers to make a ball of spun sugar. This decoration is extremely delicate and sensitive to humidity. Spun sugar should be used within a few hours after making it.

A. Cook the sugar, water, and corn syrup together to 310°F (154°C).

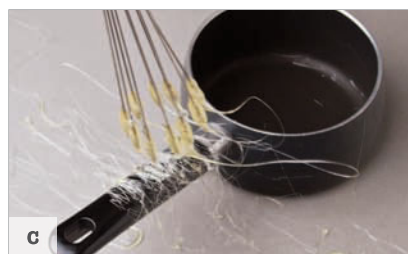
B. Dip the saucepan in an ice bath to stop it from cooking and cool it down.

C. Flick strands of sugar over saucepan handles to form spun sugar.

D. Gently gather the sugar threads together.

E. Roll them over your fingers to form delicate balls of spun sugar.

F. Use spun sugar to garnish desserts.



Bubble Sugar

Lacy and delicate, this beautiful sugar decoration adds the perfect finishing touch to cakes, tarts, and pastries. Bubble sugar is typically used as a garnish, and thus served unflavored, but if you would like to add flavoring you can stir in 1 teaspoon of your favorite extract after the sugar syrup is cooked.

- 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ ounces or $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (80 ml) water**
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces or 2 tablespoons (42 g) light corn syrup**
- 7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar**
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (22 ml) vodka**

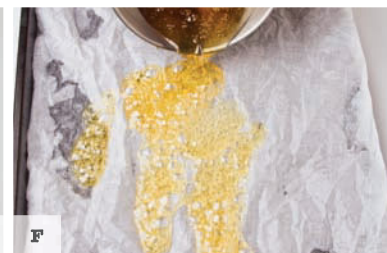
- A.** Combine the sugar, water, and corn syrup in a small saucepan over medium-high heat.
- B.** Cook the sugar syrup to 310°F (154°C).
- C.** Crumple a piece of parchment paper.
- D.** Smooth the parchment out onto a rimmed baking sheet.
- E.** Pour the vodka onto the parchment.
- F.** When the sugar is cooked, pour it onto the vodka-soaked paper and let it set.
- G.** Peel the parchment away from the hard sugar candy.
- H.** Break it into small pieces and use it to decorate cakes or pastries.

In a small saucepan, combine the water, corn syrup, and granulated sugar, and place the pan over medium-high heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then brush down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to prevent sugar crystals from forming. Bring the syrup to a boil, and once boiling, insert a candy thermometer.

Continue to cook the candy, without stirring, until it reaches 310°F (154°C) on the candy thermometer. While you wait for the candy to reach the proper temperature, prepare a piece of parchment paper by crumpling it between your hands. Smooth the parchment out onto a rimmed baking sheet—it should still retain some of the wrinkles and texture. Hold the baking sheet at an angle and drizzle the vodka over the top of the parchment so that it runs down and covers the paper.

Once the candy reaches 310°F (154°C), remove the pan from the heat. Hold the baking sheet at an angle and carefully pour the hot sugar syrup onto the parchment, so that it flows down the paper. The vodka on the crinkled paper will cause the sugar to bubble, forming a delicate, lacy texture.

Let the sugar cool and harden completely at room temperature. Once cool, flip it upside down and carefully peel off the parchment from the back of the bubble sugar. Break the sugar into small pieces by hand and use it to decorate cakes and pastries. Bubble sugar is sensitive to moisture, so it should be used on the day it is made. Do not store it in the refrigerator or any humid environment.



Sugar Spirals

Sugar spirals are fun, fanciful sugar decorations that always make people smile! They look impressive but are surprisingly easy to make once you get the hang of the technique. This method of cooking sugar is called the “dry sugar” method. It is an excellent way to caramelize small amounts of sugar, but it requires constant vigilance and stirring during the cooking process to avoid crystallization and lumps.

¼ teaspoon fresh lemon juice

7 ounces or 1 cup (196 g) granulated sugar

Rub the lemon juice into the sugar until it is well distributed and the sugar is slightly damp from the juice. This will help prevent crystallization when you caramelize the sugar.

Place a small pan over medium heat and let it preheat for several minutes until the pan is hot. Add the sugar, and begin to stir immediately and continuously. Continue to cook the sugar, stirring constantly, until it liquefies. Shortly after it becomes liquid it will start to color. Cook the caramel until it is a medium amber color.

When you first take the caramel off the heat, it will be thin and fluid. As it continues to cook in the pan and cool, it will become darker and thicker. Let the caramel sit at room temperature until it forms a thick ribbon and gives some resistance when you scoop up a spoonful from the pan.

Lightly oil a round knife sharpener or the round metal handle of a spoon. Hold the sharpener in one hand and scoop up a spoonful of thickened caramel in the other. Let most of the caramel drop off the spoon back into the pan, and when you have just a thin strand hanging from the spoon, begin to wind it around the oiled sharpener, beginning at the handle. If it drips from the sharpener to the counter, the caramel is still too thin and needs to cool for a few more minutes.

Continue to wind the sugar around the sharpener until you reach the end. Let it cool for just a moment, then gently break off any hanging strands and carefully slide the spiral off the sharpener. You can vary the speed of your movements and the temperature of the sugar to make spirals of different thicknesses: warmer caramel and faster movements produce very thin spirals, while colder caramel and slow movements make thicker, darker spirals.

Sugar spirals should be enjoyed on the same day they are made, and should not be stored in a humid environment.



- A.** Rub lemon juice into granulated sugar.
- B.** Place the sugar into a preheated pan and stir continuously.
- C.** The sugar will soon melt all at once.
- D.** Cook the sugar until it is a medium amber color.
- E.** When it is first off the heat, the caramel will be thin and fluid.
- F.** Cool the caramel at room temperature until it is very thick.
- G.** Wind the caramel around an oiled knife sharpener.
- H.** When you reach the end of the sharpener break off the strand of sugar and slide off the spiral.
- I.** Decorate tarts, cakes, or other pastries with sugar spirals.

Resources

Here is a list of online resources for finding candy ingredients, supplies, and kitchen equipment.

MOLDS, FLAVORINGS, COLORINGS, AND GENERAL CANDY-MAKING SUPPLIES FOR HOME KITCHENS

Candyland Crafts

www.candylandcrafts.com

Candy packaging, flavoring oils,
candy molds, tempering machines

Country Kitchen SweetArt

www.countrykitchensa.com

Candy molds, candy coating, deco-
rating dust, prepared candy centers

Jesters Discount Cake Supply

www.lusterdust.com

Large variety and selection of
decorating dusts

KitchenKrafts

www.kitchenkrafts.com

Decorating tools, candy molds,
chocolate, and candy coating

SugarCraft

www.sugarcraft.com

Candy flavorings and colorings, inver-
tase, cocoa butter

Wilton

www.wilton.com

Decorating and dipping tools (also
available at many arts and craft
stores)

PROFESSIONAL CANDY-MAKING SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

Chef Rubber

www.chefrubber.com

Transfer sheets, fine chocolates, citric
acid, invertase, gold leaf

JB Prince

www.jbprince.com

Silicone molds, tempering machines,
packaging and accessories

Pastry Chef Central

www.pastrychef.com

Scales, thermometers, professional
tools, gold leaf

Tomric Systems

www.tomric.com

High-quality chocolate molds, profes-
sional tools, tempering machines

GOURMET CHOCOLATES

Chocolate Source

www.chocolatesource.com

Chocosphere

www.chocosphere.com

Gourmail

www.gourmail.com

SPECIALTY INGREDIENTS

Amazon

www.amazon.com

Pomona's Universal Pectin, citric
acid, vanilla bean paste

Culinary District

www.culinarydistrict.com

Vanilla bean paste, citric acid, almond
paste, specialty chocolates

Nuts.com

www.nuts.com

Freeze-dried fruit, fresh nuts, tart
dried cherries

Acknowledgments

It is no exaggeration to say this book would not exist without the help of my husband, Jason LaBau. From making numerous late night (and early morning) grocery runs, to providing countless pep talks, to tackling endless pages of editing and even more endless sinks of dishes, he did it all with a smile on his face. He has always encouraged me to pursue my dreams, and for that faith I am grateful. This book is truly as much his as it is mine.

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I've been lucky to work with a talented creative team who helped turn my candies into works of art. Great big huge thanks go to photographer Winnie Ma and to stylist Peilin Chen Breller, both of whom went above and beyond in their dedication to getting beautiful pictures. #SBOCM!

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About the Author

Elizabeth LaBau is a food writer, a recipe developer, and an enthusiastic candy eater. A former pastry chef, she uses her years of experience working in professional kitchens to bring a modern touch to the world of old-fashioned candy making. Since 2006, she has been the Guide to Candy at About.com, an online division of the New York Times Company, where she writes creative candy recipes and step-by-step tutorials for the home cook. When Elizabeth is not playing with sugar in the kitchen, she can be found running the mountain trails around Los Angeles with a piece of candy tucked into her pocket. Learn more at www.elizabethlabau.com.

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