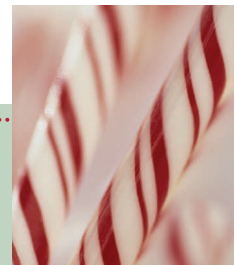


November 2015

Karen Blakeslee, M.S.

Sweet Holiday Treats

K-State Research and Extension



Candy Pointers:

- Use a candy thermometer
- Store candy in airtight containers
- Use wooden spoons to reduce sudden temperature changes
- Use deep, heavy saucepans

Inside this issue:

It's a Fudgy Secret! 1

Resources for Making Candy 1

Fixing Peanut Brittle Problems 2

Why Does Toffee Separate? 2



Shhh! It's a Fudgy Secret!

Fudge is a popular sweet treat during the holidays. Fudge is classified as a crystalline candy. The goal is to produce very fine sugar crystals by controlling the form and content of sugar, using the correct temperature, and stirring correctly. Fudge should be soft but firm with a smooth texture.

The sugar syrup mixture for fudge should be heated to the soft ball stage, 234° to 240°F. After heating, the mixture is cooled to about 120°F. The fudge should not be stirred while cooling. It is important not to cool it too much because it will not form smooth, crystalline fudge. The fudge has a shiny appearance at this point. After cooling, stir the fudge vigorously. This creates a dull finish and a creamy smooth texture with very fine sugar crystals. The fudge should hold its shape when dropped from a spoon. If overbeaten, the fudge will become too hard. This can be corrected by reheating.

Typical fudge contains a dairy ingredient such as milk or half-and-half. Curdling can occur because the acid in the chocolate curdles milk proteins. To prevent curdling, stir the fudge mixture steadily during the heating step.

Marshmallow fudge uses regular marshmallows or marshmallow cream. Marshmallows are made from sugar, egg whites and gelatin. The addition of egg whites and gelatin will coat the sugar crystals and keep them small. This results in creamy fudge.

Sources: CookWise by Shirley O. Corriher

Understanding Food Principles and Preparation by Amy Brown



Share the joy of making candy!

Resources for Making Candy

Are you just learning how to make candy? Looking for recipes? Here are some resources to help you get started.

- [Candy Making Manual](http://bit.ly/1kNjne0)—University of Idaho (<http://bit.ly/1kNjne0>)
- [The Art of Candy Making](http://bit.ly/1Hlnk98)—Utah State University (<http://bit.ly/1Hlnk98>)
- [Candy Making at High Altitude](http://bit.ly/1MB7Ucv)—Colorado State University (<http://bit.ly/1MB7Ucv>)
- [Candymaking](http://bit.ly/1kNjA0R)—University of Illinois (<http://bit.ly/1kNjA0R>)
- [Sweets for the Sweet Tooth!](http://bit.ly/1Mo7aDM) - University of Illinois (<http://bit.ly/1Mo7aDM>)
- [Candy Science](http://bit.ly/1HlnxsY)—The Science of Cooking, Exploratorium (<http://bit.ly/1HlnxsY>)



Fixing Peanut Brittle Problems

Fresh crunchy peanut brittle is a favorite homemade candy treat. As with all candy, there are some “tricks of the trade” to make a perfect peanut brittle.

Brittles are classified as noncrystalline candies. The goal is to prevent crystals from forming. Two methods can accomplish this. The first is to make a very concentrated sugar solution by evaporating water out of the syrup. The second is to add large amounts of interfering agents to block crystal formation. Examples of interfering agents include corn syrup and cream of tartar.

A key step in making brittle is heating the syrup to the proper temperature. Typically, this is the hard crack stage or 300° to 310°F. This caramelizes the sugar to an amber color. It also removes the water so that the sucrose molecules won't attract other sucrose molecules. This prevents crystallization. The moisture factor is another reason not to make brittles on rainy or humid days.

Baking soda is sometimes added to brittle. Soda foams when added and neutralizes the acidity of the brittle. It helps make the brittle more porous and airy.

Other tips to for making brittles include:

- Grease the sides of the cooking pan to prevent boiling over and prevent sugar from sticking to the sides.
- Re-using a candy thermometer or spoon without washing can cause crystallization.
- Do not stir or agitate the syrup when boiling.
- Warm or roast the nuts before adding to the syrup. Cold nuts can cool the syrup too fast and the syrup will not spread thin enough.

Source: CookWise by Shirley O. Corriher

*Knowledge
forLife*



Sugar's Functional Roles in Cooking & Food Preparation

Learn about the action of sugar beyond sweetening

www.sugar.org/images/docs/sugar-functional-roles.pdf



Why Does Toffee Separate?

Making candy is an art and can be very tricky. One in particular is toffee. During the cooking process, the butter can separate from the sugar mixture. This can be frustrating to the candy maker. Why does this happen?

First, an abrupt temperature change can cause separation. It either got too cold or too hot in a short amount of time. Start the cooking on a medium-low setting to melt the ingredients gently.

Second is the amount of stirring. If a recipe says to stir constantly and is not stirred enough, separation can occur.

Third, the type of pan used for cooking can create “hot spots” in the candy mixture. Thin, lightweight pans don't conduct heat evenly.

Finally, humidity in the kitchen can cause the candy to attract moisture. This added moisture will take longer to evaporate and cause separation.

Can it be saved? Maybe. Try removing the pan of candy from the heat and stir constantly to combine. Gradually return it to the heat while stirring. Another trick is to add a tablespoon or two of very hot water and stir until it comes back together. If the separation happens after pouring the candy to cool, it can't be saved. It can be crushed up for ice cream topping or in cookies.

Source: www.landolakes.com/TestKitchen/TipsandTechniques/FAQ#Candy

