

SALLY'S CANDY ADDICTION

TASTY TRUFFLES, FUDGES &
TREATS FOR YOUR SWEET-TOOTH FIX



SALLY MCKENNEY
Sprinkle Lover & Founder of SallysBakingAddiction.com

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DEDICATION

TO MY BLOG READERS.
ESPECIALLY THOSE OF YOU WHO ENCOURAGE SPRINKLES AND MORE CHOCOLATE.
YOU MADE THIS HAPPEN FOR ME.



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Thank you to my readers!! (I want to use about a thousand exclamation points here.) You're my favorite people on the planet. Your sweet teeth and constant excitement about cookbook #2 made it easier to write. You told me your favorite candies, which helped me create the table of contents. Not only this, you've made my blog, Sally's Baking Addiction, a fun-filled community. Please never stop being you! Can I say I love you here? Because I love you.

And finally, thank you to my husband, Kevin. Thank you for all those late nights manning the stove, stirring caramel, toffee, and fudge while I wrote blog posts. I'm sure learning how to properly make toffee was the first thing on your list after marrying me. Thank you for doing all the dishes even after working all day, for your daily emergency grocery store runs, for taste-testing every single recipe, and for smiling through it all. But most of all? Thank you for believing in me when I felt like giving up.

—Sally

INTRODUCTION

There is sticky goop on my hands, sugar all over the floor, and I'm pretty sure I just bought out every single bar of Ghirardelli® chocolate from all the grocery stores within a five-mile radius. It's early December and I'm making dozens of holiday candies to gift this year. As I cook my seventh batch of fudge, I'm beginning to rethink this whole “only homemade gifts this year!” plan.

Welcome to my candy land. It's sort of like my baking addiction, but there's not as much oven involved. Here we trade flour for sugar, and the milk for heavy cream, and instead of a batch of cookies, we'll bond over a batch of chocolate-covered caramels. Oh, there are cookies, too. Wait until you hit the last chapter of this book.

I chose candy as the subject for my second cookbook because, well, truthfully, it scared me a little. How do you use a candy thermometer? What is the correct temperature for heating chocolate? Is there a right method for taffy pulling? Wait, what is taffy pulling? The candy world can be an intimidating place. I felt like I needed a sugar PhD just to get through one batch of fudge. But then I remembered that I was also scared the day I decided to quit my “safe” day job in finance so I could pursue my blog full time. Okay, maybe I was terrified. But I did it, and I never looked back. And guess what? It was the best decision I ever made.

Like blogging, candy making wasn't always easy for me. In fact, I felt like making candy was nearly impossible and left me feeling defeated. When I began several years ago, I quickly became frustrated at the lack of instructional detail and troubleshooting tips. Um, hello? The world was practically screaming for an easy candy-making book! That's when I decided to take matters into my own hands. I dove headfirst into candy land and began teaching myself through experience, advice from



my peers, and plenty of mistakes. I burned pans, seized pounds of chocolate, lost a rubber spatula in *The Great 2010 Melt* (let's not talk about it), and made some funky brittle substance that nearly broke my teeth. My dentist loves that story.

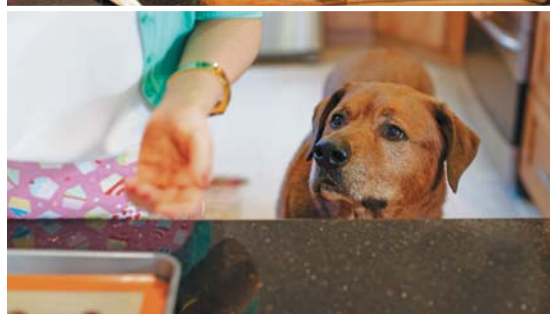


I understand that the thought of candy making can be overwhelming. I get it, I've been there. But I wrote this book to help give you the confidence to make candy from scratch. If you want to learn how to make chewy taffy for your children, smooth truffles for a bake sale, old-fashioned fudge for your grandchildren, caramels for your friends, and chocolates for your sweetheart, let me help you. I've cooked my way through batches of toffee just so I can tell you what NOT to do. And, well, so I'd be able to eat really delicious homemade toffee. Please refer to the toffee goodness on pages 104–111.

On the next few pages, you'll find information about key ingredients, essential equipment, and important candy-making basics. But I don't stop there! Sprinkled throughout the book are several how-tos and tricks to help build your candy-making confidence. Avoid disasters in the kitchen by taking the time to read my tips. These few minutes could save you from losing your mind, or worse, losing a spatula.

As for me, I'm proud to say that four years, three pea-size kitchens, and a wedding later, my blog is still my full-time job and it's better than ever. I've built up the courage and knowledge to connect with millions of readers. And I wouldn't trade it for the world. So do something that scares you. Maybe it will change your life. Maybe you'll get a little more confident in the kitchen. Maybe you'll get more confident in other parts of your life. Or maybe you'll just get to eat some homemade Lemon Cream Pie Truffles (see page 88).

The most important thing you need to know about making candy? Have fun. It's candy!





GETTING STARTED

SALLY'S KEY INGREDIENTS

Candy is very particular. There is no room for substitution in traditional candy recipes without sacrificing texture and flavor. Here is a close look at the most important ingredients used in this book.

BAKING SODA: Baking soda has a major role in the kitchen. It's used as a leavening agent in baked recipes that contain acid, such as chocolate chip cookies, which include acidic brown sugar and chocolate. It's also used in candy making. Sweets such as brittles and toffees accumulate acid from the browning reactions that occur during cooking. Baking soda is added at the end of the cooking time to react with the acid. This reaction creates rapid bubbles and foaming—remember your childhood volcano science project? It's just like that. The bubbles lighten the texture of the candy, making it easier to chew.

BUTTER: All of the recipes in this book calling for butter were tested with unsalted butter. If you substitute salted butter, reduce the salt used in the recipe (if any) by $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon per $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick; 114g) of butter. No need for fancy or expensive butter. I use the store brand or whatever is on sale.

CANDY COATING: When I refer to candy coating, I am referring to such ingredients as almond bark, candy wafers, and candy coating discs. My preferred coating is Wilton Candy Melts®. These little wafers come in a rainbow of colors and are available at candy supply shops, at craft stores, and online. Candy coating is used for decorating candies. It can also be used as a replacement for tempered or melted chocolate for dipping candies in these recipes. Candy coating comes in chocolate flavors, but these are not pure chocolate.

CHOCOLATE: Though we all love it, chocolate is a beast! This paragraph could get quite lengthy, so flip to page 42 (Chocolate: Tempering, Melting, and Dipping) for all the important details on chocolate.

CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR: Confectioners' sugar is also known as powdered sugar, or icing sugar. It comes in handy when working with marshmallows and is one of the main ingredients in buttercream candies, peanut butter cups, frostings, and other sweet delights.

CORN SYRUP: Corn syrup is sugar from corn. It is 100 percent glucose and, like all refined sweeteners, it doesn't have an ideal nutritional profile. The corn syrup used in my candy recipes is not high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS). HFCS starts with regular corn syrup but goes through an additional process to convert some of its glucose to fructose. I prefer to use Karo® Light Corn Syrup in my candy recipes because this brand does not contain HFCS. For organic, non-GMO (genetically modified organism) corn syrup, I like to use a brand called Wholesome Sweeteners®.

HEAVY CREAM: Heavy cream, also sold as whipping cream, has approximately 36 percent milk fat and is essential in caramel and truffle recipes, among others. Do not use half-and-half or light whipping cream. Double cream, with 48 percent milk fat, can be substituted.

PEANUT BUTTER: All the recipes in this book calling for peanut butter were tested with Jif® Creamy Peanut Butter or Skippy® Natural Creamy Peanut Butter. To obtain the proper texture and taste, it's important to use non-runny, non-oily peanut butters in these recipes.

SUGAR: When I refer to “sugar” in this cookbook, I am referring to granulated sugar. This is your everyday white sugar. It is used in dozens of recipes in this cookbook. Do not substitute brown sugar or any other kind of sugar for it in these candy recipes.

SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK: Sweetened condensed milk is sweetened milk from which water

has been removed. It makes recipes such as Shortcut Chocolate Fudge (page 148) quick and easy. Though it's a simple ingredient, it's a little confusing with regard to measurement. Sweetened condensed milk is typically sold in 14-ounce (397g) cans. This ounce measurement refers to weight, not volume. So, one 14-ounce (397g) can is not almost 16 fluid ounces (2 cups). Rather, it is just over 8 fluid ounces or 1 cup (240ml). I prefer Eagle Brand® Sweetened Condensed Milk.

VANILLA EXTRACT: Vanilla extract is used for flavor. I strongly encourage you to use pure extract, not imitation, in the recipes in this cookbook.

SALLY'S KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

The recipes in this book were made with everyday kitchen equipment. Here's what you'll need to prepare them:

- * 2 x 12-count standard muffin pans
- * 2 x 24-count mini muffin pans
- * 3–4 large baking sheets
- * 3–4 silicone baking mats (such as Silpat®)
- * 8- and 9-in (20 and 23cm) square baking pans
- * 9 x 2-in (23 x 5cm) deep-dish cake pan or 9-in (23cm) springform pan
- * 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) glass or ceramic baking pan
- * 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan or similar-size rimmed baking sheet
- * food processor or blender
- * heatproof bowls
- * ice cream maker
- * kitchen shears
- * liquid measuring cup (glass or plastic)
- * lollipop/ice pop sticks
- * mini muffin/cupcake liners
- * nonstick cooking spray
- * parchment or wax paper
- * rubber spatulas

- * sharp knives, including a sharp serrated knife
- * small, medium, and large mixing bowls
- * handheld or stand mixer with paddle and whisk attachments
- * wire whisk
- * wooden spoons
- * zester

You will also need the following special equipment:

CANDY THERMOMETER: Do not fear the candy thermometer! It is one of the most important tools you will use in your candy making, ensuring consistency and success. Candy thermometers are similar to meat thermometers, except they read much higher temperatures—up to around 400°F (204°C). I prefer to use digital candy thermometers because they are easier to read and can be used for tempering chocolate (where you need 1-degree readings). Never let the bulb of the candy thermometer touch the bottom of the saucepan when in use, as you'll get an inaccurate reading.

No matter what type of candy thermometer you choose, be sure to test it before use. To do this, simply clip the thermometer to a saucepan and boil some water. At sea level, water boils at 212°F (100°C). Each 500-foot (152m) increase in altitude lowers the boiling point by about 1 degree. If your thermometer reads above or below the boiling point for your location, make the necessary adjustments when cooking candy. My last piece of advice on this subject is to always have two candy thermometers on hand. You don't want to be caught in a situation where this vital tool breaks in the middle of cooking candy. Been there, done that.

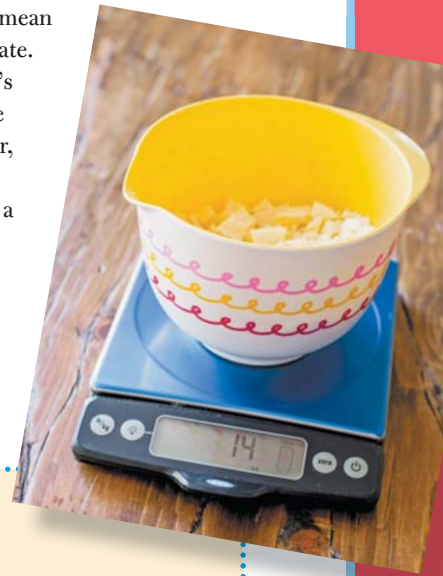
CHOCOLATE THERMOMETER: A chocolate thermometer is typically glass and displays temperatures in 1-degree readings between 80°F (27°C) and 120°F (49°C). It is required for tempering chocolate. Alternatively, a tested digital candy thermometer can be used (see above).

DIPPING TOOL: Dipping candy such as truffles, caramels, and chocolates is one hundred times easier using a dipping tool. Not only will it make dipping less of a hassle, it will help make your finished candies more presentable and eye-catching. We all love pretty candy, don't we? See page 42 (Chocolate: Tempering, Melting, and Dipping) for my preferred brand and information on how to use dipping tools.

DOUBLE BOILER: A double boiler is used for melting chocolate. For more information about melting chocolate in a double boiler, see page 44 (Chocolate: Tempering, Melting, and Dipping).

HEAVY-DUTY SAUCEPAN: Surely you have a set of saucepans in your kitchen, but you might not have the proper saucepan for making candy. Make sure your pan holds at least 3 quarts (2.8L) and is on the heavy side with a thick bottom. This type of pan distributes heat evenly and carefully, which is key in preventing your candy from scorching. I own a few pricey copper pans because of the amount of candy I make. Heavy aluminum pans are also great.

KITCHEN SCALE: A gram is always a gram, an ounce is always an ounce, but a cup isn't always a cup. What I mean is, grams and ounces are accurate. There is no mistaking them. It's easy to over- or under-measure a cup of sugar, liquid sweetener, flour, etc., even by a teaspoon. This small mistake could pose a big problem in your finished candy. For this reason, a scale is the most-used tool in my kitchen, and I strongly advise you use one as well.



HOW TO CLEAN A STICKY SAUCEPAN

I've scrubbed caramel, toffee, and hard candy off the same saucepans about 873 times. It's not always easy, and it's definitely not fun, but I've found a way that will save time (and preserve your sanity). When you're finished making sticky candy recipes—such as brittle, caramel, marshmallow, and toffee—on the stove, simply fill the saucepan with water until the water covers all of the candy residue. Place any utensils, such as spoons or knives that may have gotten dirty, inside the saucepan as well. Place the saucepan back on the stove over low heat. The warm water will simmer and melt the sugar off the sides of the saucepan. Pour out the warm water and let the saucepan and utensils sit in the sink until cool enough to handle and rinse clean. How easy is that?

LIQUID MEASURING CUP: The most common types of liquid measuring cups are glass or plastic, because you can see through them when you measure liquids using the measurement lines. Not only do I use liquid measuring cups for measuring liquids, I also use them for dipping candy in melted chocolate. The depth and shape of the liquid measuring cup makes the dipping process much easier.

PASTRY BRUSH: A pastry brush is essential to candy making. Its purpose is to help rid the saucepan of sugar syrup that may have splashed up along the sides. This sugar syrup can burn and crystallize, but running a water-moistened pastry brush around the inside of the pan helps prevent this from happening. Always keep a cup of warm water and a pastry brush near the stove as you are cooking. When brushing down the sides, be extra aware that candy is highly volatile and may splash. I suggest wearing gloves as you do this. For

more information about crystallization (candy's worst nightmare!), see Candy-Making Basics below. I strongly recommend using a pastry brush with natural bristles.

SQUEEZE BOTTLE: Squeeze bottles are used in this cookbook purely for looks. Maybe that's a little shallow? But it's a fact! Using a plastic squeeze bottle to drizzle warmed chocolate onto sweets looks neat and pretty. I own a couple of them and encourage you to as well. You can find them in the kitchen supply aisles of major grocery stores, at candy supply shops, kitchen supply shops, craft stores, and online. An alternative tool for drizzling would be a fork or spoon.



SALLY'S CANDY-MAKING BASICS

All categories of candy are prepared differently; however, here is some general knowledge that will help get you ready for the candy recipes in this book.

CANDY COOKING STAGES: Though I always encourage the precision of a trusty candy thermometer, I've included a helpful chart on the opposite page to gauge your candy's doneness. To use this chart, simply drop a bit of the candy syrup from a clean spoon into a small glass bowl of very cold water and watch what happens.

CRYSTALLIZATION: Crystallization is what turns your smooth candy into a grainy mess. It's often caused by sugar crystals forming on the sides of the pan while the candy is cooking. This is why a pastry brush (see above) is essential in making candy. Scraping the pan clean when pouring the candy out also causes crystallization. When making things such as cookie dough and frosting, we usually want to scrape the bowl clean to get every last drop of goodness, right? Don't do that with candy. The bottom of the pan is exposed to the

most heat, so the cooked candy at the bottom of the pan has a faster crystallization rate than the rest of the candy. This is especially true with fudge. Never scrape the pan clean.

DOUBLING: I do not recommend doubling the candy recipes in this cookbook. Increasing the quantities is sometimes a great idea when preparing treats in bulk, but the extra volume could prevent the candy from cooking properly. Make two separate batches instead.

WEATHER: Candy is very particular not only when it comes to ingredients (as I mentioned previously), but also with regard to weather. Sounds a little finicky, right? But it's the truth. Never cook candy on a humid day, as it will absorb moisture from the air, which can result in too-soft candies or crystallization. Cool, dry days are ideal.

CANDY COOKING STAGES

SOFT BALL	234°F (112°C)–242°F (117°C)	A limp, sticky ball that can easily be flattened when removed from the water.
FIRM BALL	244°F (118°C)–248°F (120°C)	A sticky ball that has a little resistance when removed from the water.
HARD BALL	250°F (121°C)–266°F (130°C)	A hard ball that holds its shape, but is still pliable when removed from the water.
SOFT CRACK	270°F (132°C)–290°F (143°C)	Firm threads can be stretched or bent when removed from the water.
HARD CRACK	300°F (149°C)–310°F (154°C)	Stiff, firm threads that snap and break easily when removed from the water.





CAN'T BEAT A CLASSIC

This chapter is my sugar-filled time capsule from the 1990s. When I was growing up, summers meant walking the boardwalk with a box of saltwater taffy in hand, unwrapping one piece after the other, until my jaw hurt from chewing. You know the feeling, right? Carnivals weren't complete without a candy apple, and campfire s'mores were eaten with double the marshmallow. Butter rum candies were as cozy as a warm hug, and peanut butter cups were the BEST part of my Halloween candy stash. This entire chapter is a stroll down memory lane, and my only hope is that in making these nine recipes, you will be filled with the same fuzzy feelings and nostalgia I experienced.

In terms of preparation, the candies in this chapter are all very different. A few of them, such as Cocoa Rum Balls (page 23) and Peanut Butter Cups (page 32), do not require a candy thermometer. Then there are more challenging recipes, such as Candy Apples (page 24) and Saltwater Taffy (page 31), that not only require a thermometer, but also a little patience. Trust me, if I have the patience to make these recipes, you have the talent to prepare them!

I end the chapter with a recipe that hasn't been around quite as long as the others in this section, but I have no doubt it's here to stay. Who doesn't enjoy eating cake pops as colorful as my childhood My Little Pony® collection?

MARSHMALLOWS

Prep time: 35 minutes

Total time: 6 hours, 35 minutes

Makes: about 58 x 2-in (5cm) marshmallows

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup (40g) confectioners' sugar
- 3 tbsp cornstarch
- 3 x ¼oz (7g) package unflavored gelatin
- 1 cup (240ml) cold water, divided
- 1 cup (240ml) light corn syrup
- 1½ cups (300g) sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) glass or ceramic baking pan
- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- candy thermometer
- pastry brush

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: If you don't eat the marshmallows immediately, layer them between sheets of parchment or wax paper in an airtight container and store at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week.

Store-bought marshmallows are no match for these soft and fluffy confections that are easy to make. Just remember that homemade marshmallows require several hours to set (overnight is best) so make sure you leave enough time before you get started.

- 1 Generously spray the bottom and sides of a 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) glass or ceramic baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. (I do not suggest a metal pan, as it can affect the taste of your marshmallows.) Sift the confectioners' sugar and cornstarch together into a small bowl and sprinkle some of it very lightly all around the pan. Set remainder aside to use in steps 7 and 8.
- 2 Place the gelatin and ½ cup (120ml) of the water in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Whisk on low speed for 1 minute to briefly combine. Allow to sit as you cook the sugar syrup.
- 3 Place the remaining ½ cup (120ml) of water, corn syrup, sugar, and salt in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Stir with a wooden spoon until the sugar has dissolved. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan. Remember not to let it touch the bottom of the pan. As the sugar syrup begins cooking, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush to prevent burning there.
- 4 Without stirring, cook the sugar syrup until it reaches 240°F (116°C; soft ball stage). Turn the stove off and remove the pan from heat. Turn the mixer on low speed and slowly pour the hot syrup into the gelatin mixture. The syrup will be extremely hot, so be careful.
- 5 Gradually increase the mixer speed until it reaches high. Whip the mixture for 10–15 minutes, or until it is white, thick, and shiny (see inset photo, opposite). During the last minute of mixing, add the vanilla extract.
- 6 Pour/spoon the marshmallow into the prepared baking pan and smooth out the top with a rubber spatula. Allow it to sit uncovered at room temperature for at least 6 hours, preferably overnight.
- 7 Once completely firm, it is time to cut the marshmallows. Cover a large workstation with parchment or wax paper. Liberally sprinkle this surface, as well as the top of the marshmallow, with some of the remaining cornstarch/confectioners' sugar mixture. Using a sharp knife, loosen the edges of the marshmallow from the pan and invert the pan onto the prepared surface. Lift a corner of the pan and use your fingers to help peel the marshmallow away from the pan.
- 8 Using a sharp knife, cut the marshmallow into 2-in (5cm) squares, coating the knife blade with some of the leftover cornstarch/confectioners' sugar as needed. I find running the blade under hot water and wiping it dry with a towel helps make clean cuts as well. Roll the cut edges of the marshmallows in the cornstarch/confectioners' sugar mixture so they are no longer sticky.



SALLY SAYS: You can use these homemade marshmallows in a few recipes in this cookbook: Rocky Road Fudge (page 140), Fluffernutter Swirl Fudge (page 44), and Lucky Charms® Treats (page 134). Chocolate lovers, check out my cocoa version on page 48!





COCOA RUM BALLS

Prep time: 45 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Makes: 40 balls

BALLS

1½ cups (145g) finely chopped raw unsalted pecans

38 Nilla® Wafers, ground into crumbs

½ cup (60g) confectioners' sugar

2 tbsp natural unsweetened or Dutch-process cocoa powder

2 tbsp honey, plus 1 tbsp if needed

¼ cup rum (60ml), plus 1 tbsp if needed

1 tsp vanilla extract

2 tsp orange zest

COATING SUGGESTIONS

Finely chopped pecans or hazelnuts

Crushed Nilla® Wafers

Natural unsweetened or Dutch-process cocoa powder

Confectioners' sugar

Chocolate sprinkles

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

large baking sheet

food processor (recommended)

Shortly after I announced *Sally's Candy Addiction* on my blog, I received a few emails from readers asking if I'd be including rum balls. Though I wasn't planning on it, I of course couldn't get them out of my mind for weeks, so I finally whipped up a few test batches! The orange zest in this recipe is great for extra flavor, and it pairs wonderfully with the cocoa and rum. If you don't like coconut, you can use regular rum instead—or even your favorite bourbon. For a nonalcoholic treat, swap the rum for orange juice. My friends gobbled these rum balls right up. My only regret is not making them sooner! Thanks to my blog readers for keeping me up on all things delicious!

- 1 Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Spread chopped pecans on top and toast for 8 minutes. Allow to cool for 5 minutes before handling. Set the lined baking sheet aside to use again in step 4.
- 2 In a large bowl, stir together the pecans, cookie crumbs, confectioners' sugar, and cocoa powder with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon until combined. Add the honey, rum, vanilla extract, and orange zest and stir to combine. The mixture will be a little sticky. If you find it's more on the dry side, add 1 tablespoon (15ml) more of honey or rum. Chill the mixture in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before forming into balls (this will make the mixture easier to work with).
- 3 While the mixture is chilling, get your toppings ready and place into small bowls. You can use all, some, or only one of the suggested toppings.
- 4 Remove chilled mixture from the refrigerator and, using a spoon or cookie scoop, shape into 1-in (2.5cm) balls. Roll into coating of choice and place onto the baking sheet. Repeat with remaining balls. Serve immediately or cover tightly and chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: These rum balls are a wonderful make-ahead dessert, because their cocoa, honey, and orange flavors intensify after a couple of days. Layer balls between sheets of parchment or wax paper and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks or in the freezer for up to 2 months.



SALLY SAYS: The easiest way to chop the pecans and crush the cookies is to use a food processor. If you do not own one, use a sharp knife to finely chop the pecans; to finely crush the cookies, place them in a large zippered bag, seal shut, and roll with a rolling pin.

CANDY APPLES

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 1 hour

Makes: 8 apples

INGREDIENTS

- 8 apples, at room temperature
- 2½ cups (500g) sugar
- ½ cup (120ml) light corn syrup
- ½ cup (120ml) water
- 1 tsp (5ml) liquid red food coloring

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 8 lollipop or ice pop sticks
- large baking sheet
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- candy thermometer
- pastry brush

Does it get any more classic than ruby-red candy apples? Along with Caramel Apples (see page 96), these are a favorite fall treat, and they remind me so much of all the food and fun at fairs and carnivals. The cooler fall months are the perfect time to make them, since heat and humidity can prevent the crunchy candy shell from setting properly. Candy apples are easy to make, but there are a couple of things you need to know before you start, so be sure and read the tips at the bottom of the page.

- 1 Wash and thoroughly dry the apples to get rid of any wax coating. Remove stems. With light force, insert a lollipop or ice pop stick halfway into the core of each apple from the top. Make sure it is very secure. Set apples aside.
- 2 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside.
- 3 Place the sugar, corn syrup, and water in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Stir with a wooden spoon until the sugar has dissolved. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan. Remember not to let it touch the bottom of the pan. As the mixture begins cooking, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush.
- 4 Once boiling, quickly stir in the red food coloring. There is no more stirring beyond this point. Cook the candy until it reaches 290°F (143°C; soft crack stage). Turn the stove off and immediately remove the pan from heat.
- 5 Using the stick to hold the apple, and working with one apple at a time, immediately begin dipping the apples almost all the way into the candy coating, leaving only a small area around the stick exposed (this little bare part is the best place to take your first bite). Place dipped apples on the prepared baking sheet with the stick pointing up. Allow candy coating to set for about 30 minutes before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Wrap the candy apples individually in cellophane or plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

CANDY APPLE TIPS

- * Not all apples are suitable for this particular treat. Smaller apples are best because they are easier to work with. You also want firm apples that will hold up to the hot candy coating. In terms of taste, I prefer Fuji, Granny Smith, and Gala varieties.
- * Make sure the apples are completely dry and at room temperature before you dip them; otherwise, bubbles will form in the hot candy coating as it sets—not pretty. I call apples with this problem “gremlin apples.”
- * Work quickly. The candy coating cools extremely fast. If it becomes too thick as you are dipping, simply reheat on the stove over medium heat for 2–3 minutes.





BUTTER RUM HARD CANDIES

Prep time: 40 minutes

Total time: 1 hour

Makes: 117 x 1-in (2.5cm) candies

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (400g) sugar
- ½ cup (110g) light brown sugar, packed
- ¾ cup (180ml) water
- ½ cup (120ml) light corn syrup
- 1 cup (2 sticks; 227g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature and cut into 16 pieces
- ¼ cup (60ml) honey
- ¾ tsp salt
- ½ tsp rum extract

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) baking pan
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- candy thermometer
- pastry brush
- dough scraper or sharp serrated knife
- wax paper or cellophane for wrapping

These creamy and comforting butter rum candies prove that you don't always need chocolate to satisfy your sweet tooth. Made from familiar ingredients, such as brown sugar, butter, and honey, the secret to this candy's scrumptious flavor is rum extract. You quickly stir it in after the candy reaches the hard crack stage at 300°F (149°C), and that's when the magic happens. Somehow word spreads fast whenever I make a batch of these sweets (I'm looking at you, Mom), and I get knocks at the door from everyone looking to sneak a taste. How can I say no?

- 1 Line a 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) baking pan with parchment paper. Set aside.
- 2 Place the sugar, brown sugar, water, and corn syrup in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Stir with a wooden spoon until the sugar is dissolved. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan. Remember not to let it touch the bottom of the pan. As the mixture begins cooking, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush.
- 3 Once boiling, stop stirring. Cook the candy until it reaches 270°F (132°C; soft crack stage). Quickly stir in the butter, honey, and salt. The candy's temperature will temporarily drop. While lightly stirring, cook the candy until it reaches 300°F (149°C; hard crack stage). Turn the stove off and remove the pan from heat. Stir in the rum extract and pour the candy into the prepared pan. Allow to cool for 3–5 minutes. Using a dough scraper or sharp serrated knife, score the candy into 1-in (2.5cm) squares while it is still semisoft. Allow the candy to cool completely, then separate and break into squares.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: To really make the candies last, wrap each piece individually in a wax paper or cellophane square—you can either cut your own or purchase premade wrappers online or at candy supply shops (see photo, opposite). Store wrapped candies at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 month.

POPCORN BALLS

Prep time: 25 minutes

Total time: 40 minutes

Makes: 10 balls

INGREDIENTS

5 tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature, divided (plus more for greasing)

8 cups (64g) air-popped popcorn

1 cup (200g) sugar

½ cup (80ml) light corn syrup

½ cup (80ml) water

1 tsp distilled white vinegar

1 tsp salt

1 tsp vanilla extract

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

large baking sheet

3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan

candy thermometer

pastry brush

The first idea I wrote down as I brainstormed the table of contents for this book was popcorn balls. My grandparents made these treats every Halloween. Working as a team, my grandpa popped the popcorn and my grandma prepared the sugar syrup. Together, they rolled the combined mixture into balls. I'm not sure if it was the sweet and salty taste, the satisfying chewy texture, or the fact that they made the treats together, but my grandparents loved the fruits of their labor. I can't bite into one without remembering them both. Here is their recipe.

- 1 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
- 2 Coat a large heatproof bowl with 1 tablespoon (14g) of the butter. Add the popcorn. Set the bowl and the remaining butter aside.
- 3 Place the sugar, corn syrup, water, and white vinegar in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Stir with a wooden spoon until the sugar has dissolved. There is no more stirring beyond this point as the candy cooks. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan. Remember not to let it touch the bottom of the pan. As the mixture begins cooking, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush.
- 4 Cook the candy until it reaches 260°F (127°C; hard ball stage). Turn the stove off and immediately remove the pan from heat. Stir in the remaining butter and the vanilla until smooth.
- 5 Pour the candy over the popcorn and, using a rubber spatula, stir until all of the popcorn is coated. Make sure you scrape the sides of the bowl to really get all of the candy mixture onto the popcorn. Allow to slightly cool for a minute. Then, using buttered hands, form sticky popcorn into tight 3-in (7.5cm) balls. Place balls on prepared baking sheet and allow to cool completely before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Once the balls have cooled, wrap each individually in plastic wrap and store for up to 3–4 days at room temperature in a cool, dry place.





"pulling tabby is like weight lifting!"



SALTWATER TAFFY

Prep time: 50 minutes
Total time: 1 hour, 40 minutes
Makes: 50 pieces

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp butter, plus more for greasing
- 2 cups (400g) sugar
- 2 tbsp (16g) cornstarch
- 1 cup (240ml) light corn syrup
- ¾ cup (180ml) water
- 1 tsp salt
- flavoring (see *Sally Says*, below)
- 1–2 drops liquid food coloring (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan or a similar-sized rimmed baking sheet
- silicone baking mat (recommended)
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- candy thermometer
- pastry brush
- kitchen shears
- wax paper for wrapping

Saltwater taffy is one of the best parts of a beach vacation. We used to come home with boxes of it—none of which lasted more than a few days! Taffy must be cooked to a precise temperature to achieve the perfect chewy texture. Undercooking will give it a soft, unworkable consistency; overcooking will yield a candy too hard to be called taffy. After it cooks, taffy must be pulled to get that volume. I'm warning you though, pulling taffy is as tough as lifting weights—that's why candy shops use machines!

- 1 Butter a 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan. Place in the refrigerator to chill as you prepare the taffy. A nonstick surface for cutting the taffy is needed. I use and strongly suggest a silicone baking mat. Parchment or wax paper works as well. Have it ready on your counter.
- 2 Whisk sugar and cornstarch together in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan. Place over medium heat and add the corn syrup, water, butter, and salt. Stir with a wooden spoon as the sugar dissolves. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan. Remember not to let it touch the bottom of the pan. As the mixture begins cooking, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush.
- 3 Once boiling, stop stirring. Cook the candy until it reaches 250°F (121°C; hard ball stage). Turn the stove off and remove the pan from heat. Remove the jelly roll pan from the refrigerator. Allow the candy to cool down to 240°F (116°C; soft ball stage) and gently stir in the flavoring and coloring of choice. Without scraping the pan, immediately pour the candy onto the prepared jelly roll pan and allow to slightly cool until you are comfortable handling the taffy. I usually wait around 8 minutes.
- 4 After the candy is cool enough to handle, lightly butter your hands and begin to pull the taffy (if you put too much butter on your hands, the taffy will begin to separate). I like to work with only half of the taffy at a time. Grab a friend and have her pull the other half. To pull the taffy, stretch the ends out from the middle and then fold them back toward the center. Repeat this process for about 15 minutes, until the taffy lightens and becomes more elastic. The taffy will be sticky.
- 5 When it is ready, place the taffy on the nonstick surface prepared in step 1. Butter a pair of kitchen shears and cut off a piece of taffy. Roll the piece into a rope, about ½ inch (1.25cm) in diameter, and cut it into pieces 2 inches (5cm) in length. Wrap the individual pieces in wax paper soon after they have been cut to prevent sticking. Repeat with remaining taffy.



SALLY SAYS: Flavoring oils or pure flavored extracts (not imitation) are best for taffy. I recommend ½ teaspoon LorAnn Oils or 1 teaspoon McCormick® pure extracts per batch. The flavors pictured here are vanilla, peppermint, strawberry, and orange.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store wrapped taffy at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, freeze for up to 2 months. Thaw in the refrigerator before serving.

PEANUT BUTTER CUPS

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 45 minutes

Makes: 36 cups

INGREDIENTS

1 cup (258g) creamy peanut butter, divided

1 tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

½ cup (60g) confectioners' sugar

½ tsp salt

3 cups (546g) milk chocolate chips
chocolate sprinkles (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 x 24-count mini muffin pans

36 mini muffin/cupcake liners

handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

You've hit one of the best recipes in this entire book—**HOMEMADE PEANUT BUTTER CUPS**. Enough said.

- 1 Line two 24-count mini muffin pans with mini liners (the second pan will need only 12 liners since this recipe makes 36 cups). Set aside.
- 2 With a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat ½ cup (129g) of the peanut butter, butter, confectioners' sugar, and salt on medium speed in a medium-size bowl until thick and smooth, about 3 minutes. You will be tempted to add milk because the mixture will be crumbly, but do not. Just keep mixing until it comes together. Set aside.
- 3 Combine the chocolate chips with the remaining ½ cup (129g) of peanut butter in a medium heatproof bowl. Melt in the microwave on 50 percent power in 20-second increments, stirring after each increment, until completely smooth and melted. Drop 1 teaspoon of chocolate-peanut butter mixture into each mini muffin cup. Next, measure out a scant teaspoon of the peanut butter-sugar mixture and roll it into a ball with your hands, slightly flattening it into a small, thick disc. Place on top of the chocolate-peanut butter mixture. Repeat to make the rest of the cups. Top each with another teaspoon of the chocolate-peanut butter mixture. Decorate with sprinkles, if desired. Once all of the peanut butter cups have been assembled, refrigerate for 15 minutes, or until chocolate has completely set.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: It's best to keep the peanut butter cups in their liners when storing. Layer them between sheets of parchment or wax paper in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 2 months.



SALLY SAYS: I don't normally suggest melting chocolate chips as coating for candies, but for this recipe, it works! Melting them down with peanut butter helps thin out their consistency. You can easily use semi-sweet chocolate chips instead of milk chocolate. I like to use milk chocolate because it makes the peanut butter cups taste like the real deal.





SOUTHERN-STYLE PECAN PRALINES

Prep time: 40 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 10 minutes

Makes: 24 pralines

INGREDIENTS

2 cups (198g) raw unsalted pecan halves, very roughly chopped (a few larger pieces can remain)

2 cups (400g) sugar

½ cup (110g) light brown sugar, packed

1 cup (240ml) buttermilk

1 tsp baking soda

⅛ tsp salt

4 tbsp unsalted butter (½ stick; 57g), softened to room temperature and cut into 4 pieces

1 tsp vanilla extract

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 large baking sheets

3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan

long-handled wooden spoon

candy thermometer

pastry brush

We always had pralines in the house around the holidays growing up, but back then I turned my nose up at anything with nuts. It wasn't until recently when my friend Jess brought me home a box of pralines from New Orleans that I fell in love. Praline love. Maybe I'm easy to please, but they were one of the best gifts I have ever received. And the creamy, sweet pralines I developed here pack huge flavor too. A mixture of butter, brown sugar, and tangy buttermilk is cooked on the stovetop and combined with toasted pecans ... prepare to be sent into sweeeeeet candy oblivion! Make plenty, because trust me, they will disappear in minutes.

- 1 Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Spread pecans onto one of the baking sheets (the other one can be set aside for now) and toast for 8–9 minutes, or until very lightly browned. Once the baking sheet cools down, remove and set aside the toasted nuts. You'll need this baking sheet again, so either line with new parchment paper or wipe the silicone baking mat clean and set aside.
- 2 Combine the sugar, brown sugar, buttermilk, baking soda, and salt in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Whisk until no brown sugar lumps remain and all the sugar has dissolved. With a wooden spoon, stir in the butter until completely melted. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan. Remember not to let it touch the bottom of the pan. As the mixture begins cooking, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush.
- 3 Without stirring, cook the sugar syrup until it reaches 236°F (113°C; soft ball stage). Remove from heat and quickly stir in the vanilla extract and toasted pecans. Beat with a wooden spoon for 3–4 minutes, or until the mixture has thickened and becomes opaque. Form individual pralines by spooning about 1 tablespoon of the mixture per praline onto prepared baking sheets. Allow pralines to cool at room temperature, about 30 minutes, before serving.



SALLY SAYS: Pralines are an especially temperamental candy. Make sure you prepare these on a cool day, as humidity can make them taste grainy. Also, be sure to use a long-handled wooden spoon and a 3-qt (2.8L) saucepan, because as the praline mixture cooks, it boils up very high.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Layer pralines between parchment or wax paper in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week. For longer storage, freeze up to 6 weeks. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator.

VANILLA CAKE POPS

Prep time: 2 hours

Total time: 7 hours

Makes: 40 pops

CAKE

- ½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup (200g) sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 tbsp (15ml) vanilla extract
- 1½ cups (208g) all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup (240ml) whole milk

FROSTING

- 7 tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 1¾ cups (210g) confectioners' sugar
- 2 tsp heavy cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

COATING

- 40oz (1.13kg) candy coating, any color
- ¾ cup (120g) rainbow sprinkles or nonpareils

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9 x 2-in (23 x 5cm) deep-dish cake pan or a 9-in (23cm) springform pan
- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment
- large baking sheet
- double boiler (optional)
- lollipop sticks
- cake pop stand or large Styrofoam block

Cake pops might not fall under the traditional definition of candy, but with their thick yummy coating, I certainly pop them like candy! If you've been too scared to try making them yourself, let me ease your fears.

Cake pops are simply crumbled-up cake mixed with frosting that is then rolled into balls and covered in a coating (either melted chocolate, white chocolate, or candy). My version is made with vanilla cake, a thick vanilla frosting mixture, and a pink candy coating. Why pink? Lily, the flower girl at our wedding, will only eat them if they are pink. Smart girl. Be sure and read the *Cake Pop Tips* on page 39 before you start.

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C) and spray a 9 x 2-in (23 x 5cm) deep-dish cake pan or a 9-in (23cm) springform pan with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
- 2 Make the cake: Using a handheld mixer or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter in a large bowl for 1 minute on medium speed until completely smooth and creamy. Add the sugar and beat on medium-high speed until fluffy and light in color. Beat in the egg and vanilla on high speed until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed.
- 3 Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in a medium bowl until combined. With the mixer on low speed, add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture in 3 additions, alternating with the milk and mixing after each addition just until incorporated. Do not overmix. The batter will be slightly thick.

continued on page 38



- 4 Pour/spoon the batter evenly into the prepared pan. Bake for 32–36 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. If you begin to see the top browning quickly as it bakes, loosely cover the cake with aluminum foil. Allow to cool completely in the pan on a wire rack, at least 3 hours.
- 5 Using your hands, crumble the cooled cake into a large bowl. You do not want any large pieces of cake. Set aside.
- 6 Make the frosting: Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle or whisk attachment, beat the butter in a large bowl for 2 minutes on medium speed. Add confectioners' sugar, cream, and vanilla with the mixer running on low. Increase the mixer to high speed and beat for 3 minutes.
- 7 Add the frosting to the crumbled cake and mix with a rubber spatula until fully combined. Sometimes I just use my hands for mixing the cake crumbs with the frosting! It really helps get all of the crumbs perfectly moistened.
- 8 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside.
- 9 Form the cake balls: Measure 1 tablespoon of the cake mixture and roll into a smooth ball. Place on the baking sheet and repeat with the rest of the mixture (see photo, opposite). Put the balls in the freezer for 25 minutes or refrigerate for 2 hours. You want the balls to be very cold, but not fully frozen.
- 10 During the last few minutes of the chilling time, begin melting the candy coating. You can use a double boiler or a microwave.
- 11 Coat the cake balls: Remove 2–3 cake balls from the refrigerator or freezer, keeping the rest chilled in the refrigerator (if you've had them in the freezer, transfer them to the refrigerator at this time to prevent them from fully freezing). Working with one at a time, dip a lollipop stick about ½ inch (1.25cm) into the melted candy coating, then insert it into a cake ball. Only push it about halfway through the cake ball. Holding the lollipop stick, dip the cake ball into the coating until it is completely covered. Make sure the coating covers the base of the cake ball where it meets the lollipop stick—this helps secure the ball on the stick. Very gently tap the stick against the edge of the bowl to allow any excess coating to drip off. Rotate the stick and continue lightly tapping to ensure the coating drips off evenly all the way around. When most of the excess coating has dripped off, decorate the top of the cake ball with sprinkles, then stick the pop upright into the Styrofoam block. Repeat the step with the remaining cake balls and allow the pops to dry completely at room temperature.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: This is a fun, easy recipe to make ahead of time for parties, showers, bake sales, and other events. Store undipped cake balls, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 3 days or freeze them for up to 6 weeks in a freezer bag. Then, continue with step 11 in the recipe. Store finished cake pops, covered, at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 days or in the refrigerator for 5 days.

..... CAKE POP TIPS

- * When I first began making cake pops, I went heavy on the frosting because hello! Frosting is the best part of cake! However, I quickly learned that too much frosting creates a cake pop center that is way too moist. The frosting recipe here yields just enough to barely moisten the cake crumbs.
- * Make sure there is enough room in your refrigerator (or freezer) for the baking sheet. In step 9, the cake balls must chill.
- * You can use 40 ounces (1.13kg) of chopped white chocolate instead of the candy coating. I recommend melting the white chocolate with ½ teaspoon of canola or vegetable oil, which will help thin out the chocolate and make dipping the heavy cake pops easier. Feel free to tint the white chocolate your desired color with a couple drops of liquid food coloring. For tips on melting chocolate, see page 44 (Chocolate: Tempering, Melting, and Dipping).
- * If you don't have a cake pop stand, a large block of sturdy Styrofoam works well for holding the cake pops upright as the coating sets. You can find this at a craft store. Alternatively, you can hold the cake pop upright until the top has almost completely set, about 5 minutes, then set the pop upside-down on the baking sheet.





THE CHOCOLATE-COVERED CHAPTER

I'm a firm believer that chocolate makes the world go round. And so I, of course, had to dedicate a whole chapter to it in this book. From pretzels and chips to homemade candy bars and bark, you'll find many ways to enjoy this praiseworthy ingredient over the next several pages.

The chapter begins with chocolate-covered treats, including pretzels, marshmallows, and something a little unexpected on page 50 (trust me on those). Later in the chapter are a few of my favorite bark recipes. Chocolate bark is one of my favorite candies to make because there's so much pure, sweet, and seductive chocolate involved. You can add any goodies to chocolate bark, as you'll soon see (pages 62-69). Plus it's easy to make—so easy, you'll think you're doing something wrong.

Before beginning these chocolate candy recipes, it will be helpful for you to review the section called “Chocolate: Tempering, Melting, and Dipping” on page 42. Though a simple pleasure, chocolate is a complicated ingredient that requires understanding it to achieve success. Once you have the knowledge to begin, you will master the chocolate treats in this chapter. And everyone (I mean everyone!) will love you for it.

CHOCOLATE: TEMPERING, MELTING, AND DIPPING

Unless otherwise noted, always use pure chocolate when preparing the recipes calling for chocolate in this cookbook. When I say 8 ounces (227g) of chocolate, I do not mean chocolate chips, which are designed NOT to melt so they can hold their shape in chocolate chip cookies. The chocolate I am referring to is pure chocolate sold in bar form. The brands I prefer are Baker's and Ghirardelli®. These bars are sold in 4-ounce (113g) quantities and can be found in the baking aisle of major grocery stores. If you can swing it, use Scharffen Berger or Lindt Excellence bars. I also like to use Pound Plus bars from Trader Joe's®. Wonderful for the price, each Pound Plus bar is, you guessed it, a little over a pound (454g).

Tempering, melting, and using chocolate for dipping begins with coarsely chopped chocolate. Use a very sharp knife (I prefer a serrated one) and a cutting board. When I say coarsely chopped, I mean the pieces should be around the size of a pea. For easy melting, make sure each piece is relatively equal in size.

The terms “tempering” and “melting” are not interchangeable. You have to melt chocolate in order to temper it, but you don't always have to temper your melted chocolate. Have I lost you already? Let me explain.

TEMPERING

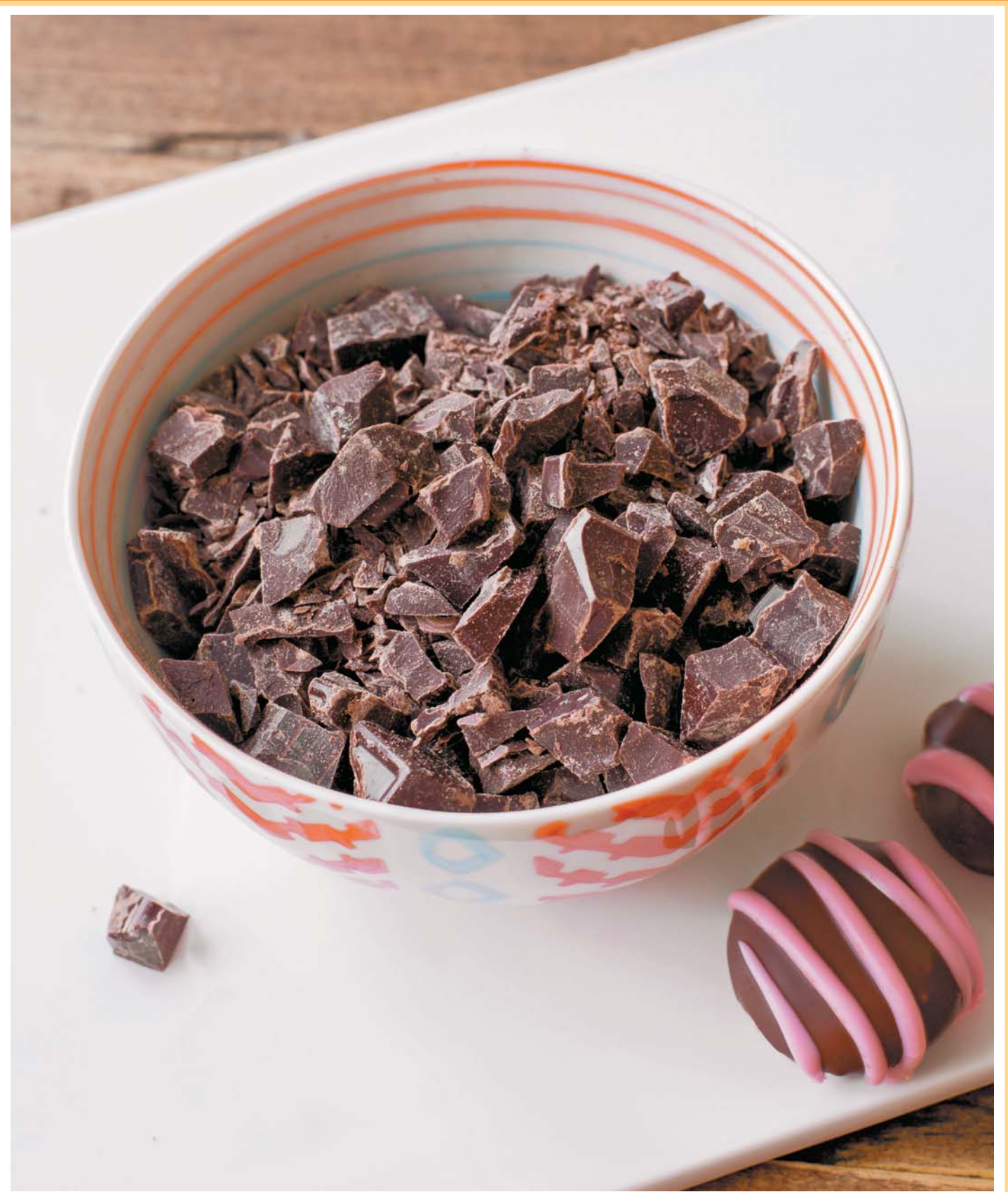
Tempering chocolate is not required for the recipes in this book, but it is my preference. In each recipe where tempered chocolate could be used, I give you the option to just use melted chocolate (without tempering it) instead. Simply put, tempering is a matter of heating and cooling melted chocolate to certain temperatures so that the finished chocolate will have a glossy surface, a smooth texture, a slow-melting quality in your mouth, and will snap when it's broken. More pros: properly tempered chocolate will not melt on contact with your fingers, nor will it have unappealing white streaks on the surface (such streaks are the result

of chocolate “fat blooming,” which occurs when cocoa fat rises to the surface after chocolate has been warmed and sets again). The pure chocolate you buy to use in the recipes in this book has been tempered in factories, but once you melt it to use as a coating, the tempering process must be repeated in order to obtain the same desirable texture. Tempered chocolate should not be refrigerated. Please follow the make-ahead tips in each recipe for proper storage.

How to Temper Chocolate: Before you do anything, you will need a chocolate thermometer (see page 15 for more information about this tool). There are a few ways to temper chocolate and no way is the “best” way. I find the easiest way is to “chunk” or “block” temper chocolate. This method uses chunks of chocolate as “seed” for the heated chocolate.

Melt $\frac{2}{3}$ of the chocolate you need using a double boiler (for an explanation of how to do this, see “Melting” below[ck. in layout]). Melt the chocolate to 115°F (46°C) if using bittersweet/semi-sweet chocolate or 110°F (43°C) if using milk/white chocolate.

Remove the chocolate from the heat and, using a rubber spatula or wooden spoon, stir in the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ chocolate (the “seed”) in one fluid, circular motion.





Adding the seed chocolate helps lower the temperature more quickly than if you melted all of the chocolate at once and then let it cool down to the prescribed temperature.

Stir until all of the chocolate has melted and reaches the appropriate temperature: 90°F (32°C) for bitter-sweet/semi-sweet chocolate or 87°F (31°C) for milk/white chocolate. Congratulations! Your chocolate is now in temper.

A tip: If your chocolate has reached the proper temperature and there are still pieces of unmelted chocolate, remove those pieces with a spoon.

MELTING

If tempering chocolate has you running for the hills, you can simply melt chocolate without tempering it. When coating candies, another option is to use an equal amount of candy coating instead (see Key Ingredients, page 13), for more information on candy coating). Chocolate that has been melted but not tempered has a dull look when it sets and could have

white streaks as a result of “fat blooming,” explained on page 42. Bloomed chocolate is not harmful; it is still fine to eat. Untempered melted chocolate is quick to melt at room temperature in warmer months, so make sure you follow my make-ahead tips in each recipe for proper storage.

Using a Double Boiler: This is my preferred method for melting chocolate. A double boiler is a set of two pans, one fitted securely on top of the other. It is the safest way to melt chocolate, because you have little risk of scorching it. You are also in control of the melting process, as opposed to melting in the microwave. To use a double boiler, pour enough water into the bottom pan to fill just below the bottom of the top pan. Temporarily remove the top pan and bring the water in the bottom pan to a simmer. Place the chopped chocolate in the top pan and fit it back on top of the pan with the simmering water. Constantly stir the chocolate as it gently melts. Alternatively, you can make your own double boiler by fitting a heatproof bowl over a pot of simmering water. You want about an inch (2.5cm) of water in the pot so that the bowl sits over the water without touching it.

Melting Chocolate in a Microwave: My number one rule for melting chocolate in the microwave is to use care. Using a microwave to melt chocolate is not ideal because even 5 seconds too long can scorch your precious chocolate. To go the microwave route, place the chopped chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl and place the bowl in the microwave. Heat on 50 percent power in 15- to 20-second increments, stirring the chocolate between each increment. It will take about 2 minutes total for 8–10 ounces (227–283g) of chocolate to melt in full. When microwaving, you don't need to completely melt the chocolate before removing it from the microwave, because the warmed chocolate will continue to melt as you stir it. Always stop early to be safe.

DIPPING

For ease, I like to use a dipping tool. You can purchase a two- or three-piece dipping tool set at candy supply shops or online. I use Ateco® brand. An alternative is a



fork. Use toothpicks to help slide the candy off the fork after dipping.

How to Use Dipping Tools: Hold the end of the tool and place the candy on the tip, which will either be spiral-shaped or pronged depending on which tool you're using. I like to use the spiral tool for dipping truffles and other sphere-shaped candies, such as Peanut Butter Buckeyes (page 52). I save the pronged tools, which have either two or three prongs, for square candies, such as Chocolate Sea-Salt Caramels (page 102). I like to use a spoon or fork in addition to the dipping tool to help coat the candy when it is submerged in the melted chocolate. When lifting the candy out of the chocolate, tap the dipping tool gently on the side of the double boiler or dish you are using to allow excess chocolate to drip off. How to get the candy off the tool after it is dipped? If using the spiral tool, simply flip the tool with the candy upside down onto a lined baking sheet and quickly lift and jiggle the tool to separate it from the candy. If using a pronged tool, slide the candy off the dipping tool using a toothpick.

Keeping Chocolate Fluid: When dipping treats into chocolate, make sure the chocolate is warm and fluid. If tempered chocolate has thickened or cooled as you are dipping, simply reheat it in the double boiler until it reaches the proper temperature. If you're working with melted chocolate that is not tempered, you can do a couple things to keep it warm while you are dipping. It sounds so silly, but I use a heating pad! Simply place the heatproof bowl or pan holding the melted chocolate on top of a heating pad set on a low setting. Easy, right? You can also use a slow cooker or electric skillet. Make sure both appliances are set to low and you line each with 2 or 3 dry cloth towels (dish towels) to keep the bowl of melted chocolate from direct heat.

One Last Thing: Before you begin working with chocolate, always remember that water is chocolate's worst nightmare. Never let water come into contact when tempering, melting, or dipping candies into chocolate.



*"My go-to
treat!"*

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED PRETZELS

Prep time: 45 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Makes: ½ pound (227g) pretzels

INGREDIENTS

14oz (397g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

8oz (227g) pretzel twists, divided

14oz (397g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped

sprinkles (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

3 large baking sheets

double boiler (optional)

2 squeeze bottles (optional)

Chocolate-dipped pretzels are where my candy addiction began and I couldn't write a candy cookbook without them. They're a family favorite that I've been making for years, even before I knew how to prepare any other kind of dessert. I typically make a big batch of them using white and semi-sweet chocolate, and I've included both in this recipe. Don't forget to adorn some (or all!) pretzels with colorful sprinkles. Clearly, they're the best part.

- 1 Line 3 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 2 Melt or temper the semi-sweet chocolate (see page 42). Dip a pretzel three-quarters of the way into the warm chocolate, lift it out of the chocolate, and gently shake it to allow excess chocolate to drip off. Place pretzel onto the prepared baking sheet to allow chocolate to set. Repeat with half of the pretzels. If decorating with sprinkles, do so while the chocolate is still wet.
- 3 Melt or temper the white chocolate and dip the remaining pretzels into the warm white chocolate as you did in step 2.
- 4 Optional: If you want to add an extra chocolate drizzle to the pretzels (as pictured here), warm any leftover semi-sweet and/or white chocolate in the double boiler—or in small heatproof bowls in the microwave at 50 percent power for 10 seconds each. Drizzle white chocolate over pretzels dipped in semi-sweet chocolate, and semi-sweet chocolate over those dipped in white chocolate with squeeze bottles (or forks).
- 5 Allow chocolate to completely set before serving, about 30 minutes.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: If the chocolate hasn't been tempered, wrap pretzels tightly in plastic wrap and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. If the chocolate has been tempered, wrap and store pretzels in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 4 weeks.



SALLY SAYS: I use a 16-ounce (454g) bag of pretzels and favor larger pretzel twists because they are easier to work with. I dunk them about three-quarters of the way into the chocolate, holding the bottom of the pretzel with my thumb and index finger, but you could use a pronged dipping tool instead. You could also dunk the entire pretzel into the chocolate, but I find the way I've described here to be much easier and less messy.

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED COCOA MARSHMALLOWS

Prep time: 50 minutes

Total time: 7 hours, 50 minutes

Makes: about 58 x 2-in (5cm) marshmallows

MARSHMALLOWS

- ⅔ cup (57g) natural unsweetened or Dutch-process cocoa powder, divided
- ¼ cup (30g) confectioners' sugar
- 2 tbsp (16g) cornstarch
- 1½ cups (320ml) cold water, divided
- 3 x ¼oz (7g) package unflavored gelatin
- 1 cup (240ml) light corn syrup
- 1½ cups (300g) sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 16oz (454g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- chocolate sprinkles

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) glass or ceramic baking pan
- stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- candy thermometer
- pastry brush
- 2 large baking sheets
- double boiler (optional)

These cocoa marshmallows are the perfect addition to a steamy mug of hot chocolate on a cold winter afternoon. They begin the same way as my Marshmallows (see page 20), but I simply add a cocoa mixture to the gelatin before pouring in the cooked sugar syrup for that wonderful cocoa flavor. These sweets make a wonderful gift for the chocoholic in your life . . . just don't forget the chocolate sprinkles!

- 1 Generously spray the bottom and sides of a 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) glass or ceramic baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside. Sift half of the cocoa powder (⅓ cup, or 28g), the confectioners' sugar, and the cornstarch together in a small bowl and very lightly sprinkle all around the prepared pan. Leave enough to use in steps 8 and 9, and set aside.
- 2 Place remaining cocoa powder and ⅓ cup (80ml) water in a heatproof bowl or mug. Microwave on high power for 90 seconds. Stir the hot mixture vigorously until combined. Set aside.
- 3 Place gelatin and ½ cup (120ml) water in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Whisk on low speed for 1 minute to briefly combine. Add the hot cocoa mixture and whisk on low speed for 30 seconds. Allow to sit as you begin cooking the sugar syrup.
- 4 Place the remaining ½ cup (120ml) water, corn syrup, sugar, and salt in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Stir with a wooden spoon until the sugar is dissolved. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan. Remember not to let it touch the bottom of the pan. As the sugar syrup begins cooking, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush to prevent crystallization. Without stirring, cook the sugar syrup until it reaches 240°F (116°C; soft ball stage). In the meantime, every 3 minutes or so, turn the mixer on low for 20 seconds to ensure the gelatin and cocoa mixture remains well mixed.
- 5 Turn the stove off and remove the pan with the sugar syrup from heat. Turn the mixer on low speed and slowly pour the hot syrup into the gelatin mixture. The syrup is extremely hot, so be careful.
- 6 Gradually increase the mixer speed until it reaches high. Whip the mixture for 10–15 minutes, or until it is light brown, thick, and shiny. During the last minute of mixing, add the vanilla extract.
- 7 Pour/spoon the marshmallow mixture into the prepared baking pan and smooth out the top with a rubber spatula. Allow it to sit uncovered at room temperature for at least 6 hours, preferably overnight.
- 8 Once completely firm, it is time to cut the marshmallows. Cover a large workstation with wax or parchment paper. Liberally sprinkle the surface, as well as the top of the marshmallow, with some of the remaining cocoa/

confectioners' sugar/cornstarch mixture. Using a sharp knife, loosen the edges of the marshmallow from the pan and invert the pan onto the prepared surface. Lift a corner of the pan and use your fingers to help peel the marshmallow away from the pan.

- 9 Using a sharp knife, cut the marshmallow into 2-in (5cm) squares, coating the knife blade with some of the remaining cocoa/confectioners' sugar/cornstarch mixture as needed. I find running the blade under hot water and wiping dry with a paper towel helps make clean cuts as well. Roll the cut edges of the marshmallows in the coating mixture so they are no longer sticky.
- 10 Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside. Melt or temper the semi-sweet chocolate (see page 42). Dip a marshmallow halfway into the warm chocolate, lift it out of the chocolate, and gently shake it to allow excess chocolate to drip off. Place marshmallow onto the prepared baking sheet and top with sprinkles. Repeat with remaining marshmallows. Allow chocolate to completely set before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: If you don't eat the marshmallows immediately, layer them between sheets of parchment or wax paper in an airtight container and store at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week.



CHOCOLATE-DIPPED POTATO CHIPS

Prep time: 25 minutes

Total time: 40 minutes (includes chilling)

Makes: 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

12oz (340g) semi-sweet chocolate,
coarsely chopped

16oz (454g) bag thick-ridged
potato chips

sprinkles

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 large baking sheets

double boiler (optional)

My friends invited me over to watch Sunday football recently (which to me means sitting and eating on the couch with the game on somewhere in the background), and they asked me to bring chips and dip. So, I brought these. What? Don't look at me like that. There are chips. And there's dip. And I'm happy to report that these chocolate-covered potato chips disappeared before the first beer was popped open. Touchdown . . . for real.

- 1 Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 2 Melt or temper the semi-sweet chocolate (see page 42), then immediately begin dipping chips. Simply hold a chip by one end and dip it halfway into the chocolate. Lightly tap the chip on the edge of the bowl holding the chocolate to remove excess. Place the dipped chip onto prepared baking sheet and immediately top the chocolate with sprinkles while still wet. Repeat with remaining chips. Allow chocolate to completely set before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: It is not a good idea to make this recipe in advance, as over time, the chips start to lose their crunch. Instead, serve them soon after they are dipped. Keep them at room temperature.



SALLY SAYS: You won't use the entire bag of potato chips because there are always broken chips that are difficult to coat in chocolate. You should crush up the leftover broken chips and use them as decoration for Caramel Apples (page 96). No really. Try it.





PEANUT BUTTER BUCKEYES

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 1 hour (includes chilling)

Makes: 32 balls

INGREDIENTS

½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

¾ cup (194g) creamy peanut butter (not natural style)

½ tsp vanilla extract

⅛ tsp salt

3 cups (360g) confectioners' sugar

16oz (454g) semi-sweet chocolate

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 large baking sheets

handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

double boiler (optional)

dipping tool (optional)

What the heck is a buckeye?! I didn't just make up that name, I swear. Buckeyes are peanut butter balls partially dipped in semi-sweet chocolate. They're practically the same thing as peanut butter cups (page 32), just in a different shape. My friend Marie, who is from Cleveland, Ohio, tells me that they're named for their resemblance to the nut of the Ohio buckeye tree. Whatever they're called, they're fan-freaking-tastic. (That word is really the only way to describe them.) I do not recommend tempered chocolate for this recipe, as the peanut butter filling tastes best stored in the refrigerator.

- 1 Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 2 Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed in a large bowl until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add the peanut butter, vanilla, and salt. Beat on high until combined and creamy. Add the confectioners' sugar and beat on low for 2 minutes until everything is combined. The mixture is supposed to be a little soft, yet crumbly (see inset photo).
- 3 Begin rolling peanut butter dough into 1-in (2.5cm) balls and place on the baking sheets.
- 4 Chill peanut butter balls in the freezer until firm, about 30 minutes, or in the refrigerator for 1 hour. During the last few minutes of the chilling time, begin melting the chocolate. Melt the chocolate, being careful not to overheat it (see page 44).
- 5 Remove peanut butter balls from the freezer or refrigerator and dip them in the chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). When dipping, leave a small portion of peanut butter showing at the top to make them look like buckeyes. When lifting the buckeye out of the chocolate, remember to tap the dipping tool gently on the side of the bowl to allow excess chocolate to drip off.
- 6 Place balls, peanut-butter side up, back onto the baking sheet after you dip each one. Allow chocolate to completely set before serving.



SALLY SAYS: Make sure the peanut butter balls are very cold before you begin dipping. Do not take them out of the freezer until right before you are ready to begin. You may need to reheat the chocolate on occasion as you are working, because it will thicken and cool down as time passes during the dipping process.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Layer buckeyes between sheets of parchment or wax paper in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 2 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator.

EASY VANILLA BUTTERCREAMS

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 1 hour

Makes: 60 candies

INGREDIENTS

½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

4 cups (480g) confectioners' sugar

3 tbsp (44ml) heavy cream

1 tbsp (15ml) vanilla extract

20oz (567g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

4oz (113g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 large baking sheets

double boiler (optional)

handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

dipping tool (optional)

squeeze bottle (optional)

American poet Robert Frost once said, “In three words, I can sum up everything I’ve learned in life: it goes on.” Absolutely true. Another trio of words I find significant: frosting rules all. Vanilla buttercream candies are basically chocolate-covered frosting. Delicious? Yes. Sweet? Irresistible? Oh yes. For an equally easy fruity treat, see my strawberry version on page 56! I do not recommend tempered chocolate for this recipe, and the buttercream tastes best refrigerated.

- 1 Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 2 Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed in a large bowl until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add the confectioners' sugar and beat on low for 1 minute. Add the cream and vanilla and beat on high for 3 minutes, or until completely smooth and creamy. The mixture will be very sticky. Cover the bowl tightly with aluminum foil or plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour and up to 1 day. Chilling for the short period of time makes working with the buttercream a little easier.
- 3 Once chilled, remove the mixture from the refrigerator. Scoop 1 teaspoon of the buttercream mixture and roll into a ball. Slightly flatten the ball with your hands and place on prepared baking sheet. Repeat with rest of buttercream mixture. As you are rolling, if the mixture starts to become too soft to handle, chill in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. To help prevent the buttercream from sticking to your hands, powder your hands with confectioners' sugar.
- 4 Chill the buttercreams in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour and up to 1 day. During the last few minutes of the chilling time, melt the chocolate (see page 44).
- 5 Remove buttercreams from the refrigerator and dip each one completely into the chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). I like to use a spoon or fork in addition to the dipping tool to help coat the buttercream when it is submerged in the chocolate. When lifting the buttercream out of the chocolate, remember to tap the dipping tool gently on the side of the bowl to allow excess chocolate to drip off. Place buttercreams back onto baking sheet after dipping.
- 6 Melt the white chocolate (see page 44). Remove from heat and drizzle over buttercreams with a squeeze bottle (or fork). Refrigerate for 15 minutes, or until chocolate has completely set, before serving.



SALLY SAYS: Make sure the buttercreams are very cold before you begin dipping—it makes the process much easier.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Layer buttercreams between sheets of parchment or wax paper and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, freeze for up to 2 months and thaw overnight in the refrigerator.





STRAWBERRY BUTTERCREAMS

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 1 hour

Makes: 60 candies

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (20g) freeze-dried strawberries
- ½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 3½ cups (420g) confectioners' sugar
- 3 tbsp (44g) heavy cream
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 20oz (567g) bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 4oz (113g) pink candy coating (see page 13)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT


- food processor or blender
- 2 large baking sheets
- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment
- double boiler (optional)
- dipping tool (optional)
- squeeze bottle (optional)

Here is an elegant collision of two favorites: strawberry buttercream frosting and bittersweet chocolate. The filling for these simple chocolate candies is similar to Easy Vanilla Buttercreams (page 54). For a brilliant strawberry flavor, I grind up freeze-dried strawberries into powder using a food processor. When this powder is combined with butter, confectioners' sugar, and bittersweet chocolate, you're guaranteed a (pink!) recipe for sweet strawberry success.

- 1 Using a food processor or blender, grind up the freeze-dried strawberries into a fine powder. There should be around ½ cup of powder total.
- 2 Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 3 With a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed in a large bowl until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add the confectioners' sugar and ½ cup of strawberry powder and beat on low for 1 minute. Add the cream and vanilla and beat on high for 3 minutes, or until completely smooth and creamy. The mixture will be very sticky. Cover the bowl tightly with aluminum foil or plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour and up to 1 day. Chilling for the short period of time makes working with the buttercream a little easier.
- 4 Once chilled, remove the mixture from the refrigerator. Scoop 1 teaspoon of the buttercream mixture and roll into a ball. Slightly flatten the ball with your hands and place on prepared baking sheet (see photo on page 58). Repeat with rest of buttercream mixture. As you are rolling, if the mixture starts to become too soft to handle, chill in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. To help prevent the buttercream from sticking to your hands, powder your hands with confectioners' sugar.
- 5 Chill the buttercreams in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour and up to 1 day. During the last few minutes of the chilling time, melt the chocolate (see page 44).
- 6 Remove buttercreams from the refrigerator and dip each one completely into the chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). I like to use a spoon or fork in addition to the dipping tool to help coat the buttercream when it is submerged in the chocolate. When lifting the buttercream out of the chocolate, remember to tap the dipping tool gently on the side of the bowl to allow excess chocolate to drip off. Place buttercreams back onto baking sheet after dipping.

continued next page

- 7 Melt candy coating in a small heatproof bowl in the microwave at 50 percent power in 20-second increments, stirring after each increment, until completely smooth and melted. Remove from heat and drizzle over buttercreams with a squeeze bottle (or fork). Refrigerate for 15 minutes or until chocolate has completely set before serving.

 **SALLY SAYS:** If bittersweet chocolate isn't your favorite, use semi-sweet chocolate instead.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Layer buttercreams between sheets of parchment or wax paper and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, freeze for up to 2 months and thaw overnight in the refrigerator.



CHOCOLATE CRUNCH CANDY BARS

Prep time: 15 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

Makes: about 18 bars

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (50g) crispy rice cereal
- 24oz (680g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) baking pan
- double boiler (optional)

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: I like to wrap each bar individually in plastic wrap for a quick grab 'n' go treat. If chocolate has not been tempered, wrapped candy bars keep well in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 10 days. If chocolate has been tempered, wrapped candy bars keep well in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for 3 weeks.

It does not get any easier. The end.

- 1 Line a 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) baking pan with aluminum foil or parchment paper, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the mixture once the chocolate has set. Set aside.
- 2 Pour crispy rice cereal into a very large heatproof bowl. Set aside.
- 3 Melt or temper the semi-sweet chocolate (see page 42), then immediately pour over cereal and stir with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon until combined. Pour mixture into the prepared baking pan and, as best you can, smooth into an even layer. I like to use the back of a small spoon to smooth this bumpy mixture down into the pan. Cover the pan tightly and allow the chocolate to completely set in the refrigerator (if chocolate has not been tempered) or at room temperature (if chocolate has been tempered).
- 4 Once the chocolate has set, remove the whole mixture from the pan using the overhang on the sides; invert onto a large cutting board, peel away foil, turn back over, and cut into bars.





CHOCOLATE COCONUT CANDY BARS

Prep time: 2 hours

Total time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Makes: about 25 bars

INGREDIENTS

14oz (396g) bag shredded
sweetened coconut

14oz (396g) can full-fat sweetened
condensed milk

2 cups (240g) confectioners' sugar

¼ tsp salt

1½ tsp vanilla extract

18oz (510g) semi-sweet chocolate,
coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

9-in (23cm) square baking pan

double boiler (optional)

dipping tool (optional)

squeeze bottle (optional)

There are two kinds of people on this planet: those who despise coconut and those who love it. I fall into the latter category, and hopefully (fingers crossed!), you do, too. I love coconut in any and every way. Coconut water, toasted coconut, coconut curry—you get the idea. For something a little less . . . um . . . healthy, these creamy coconut bars satisfy my coconut craving. Enrobed in semi-sweet chocolate, they're nothing short of wonderful!

- 1 Line a 9-in (23cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the coconut mixture after chilling. Set aside.
- 2 In a large bowl, stir together coconut, sweetened condensed milk, confectioners' sugar, salt, and vanilla extract until combined. The mixture will be very sticky and might be hard to stir, so use some arm muscle.
- 3 Press the mixture into the prepared baking pan, doing your best to do so evenly. I use the back of a spoon to help pack it down tightly. Cover the pan tightly and refrigerate for at least 1½ hours.
- 4 While the mixture is chilling, line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside.
- 5 After the mixture has chilled, it should be firm and easy to work with. If it is still quite sticky, chill for 1 hour. Remove foil from the pan using the overhang on the sides. Slice the coconut mixture into rectangles, about 1 x 2 inches (2.5 x 5cm) large. Peel off any foil adhering to the rectangles. Place the bars on the prepared baking sheet and refrigerate until ready to dip.
- 6 Melt or temper the chocolate (see page 42). Remove coconut bars from the refrigerator and, working with one at a time, dip in the chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). Place bars onto the baking sheet after dipping. If there is leftover chocolate, drizzle it over the bars using a squeeze bottle (or fork). Allow the chocolate to set completely at room temperature for 1 hour.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: I like to wrap each bar individually in plastic wrap for a quick grab 'n' go treat. If chocolate has not been tempered, wrapped candy bars keep well in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 10 days. If chocolate has been tempered, wrapped candy bars keep well in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for 3 weeks.

STRAWBERRY PRETZEL BARK

Prep time: 45 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Makes: about 1 pound (454g)

INGREDIENTS

10oz (283g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped, divided

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (42g) broken pretzel pieces

8oz (227g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (13g) freeze-dried strawberries

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

large baking sheet

double boiler (optional)

squeeze bottle (optional)

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store bark in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week. During warmer months, I like to keep bark in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks for a cold treat.

I love chocolate-covered pretzels and strawberries, and if you do as well, this is a candy you have to try. I prefer to use freeze-dried strawberries because they work best with chocolate. Regular dried strawberries work, too, but the chilled bark is a little hard to chop/break with hard chunks of dried strawberries. Do not use fresh strawberries; they are much too wet. You can find freeze-dried strawberries near the dried fruit in most major grocery stores.

- 1 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside.
- 2 Melt 8 ounces (227g) of the semi-sweet chocolate (see page 44). Remove from heat and stir in the pretzels.
- 3 Pour melted chocolate onto the prepared baking sheet and spread it into an even layer with a rubber spatula. The pretzels will make it a little uneven, which is okay. Place the chocolate in the refrigerator for 20 minutes, or until it has almost completely set. If it sets completely, the bark layers could separate.
- 4 During this time, melt the white chocolate (see page 44). Once melted, stir in the strawberries. Pour the white chocolate over the semi-sweet chocolate layer. Spread into an even layer as best you can.
- 5 Melt the remaining semi-sweet chocolate. Remove from heat and drizzle over the white chocolate with a squeeze bottle (or fork).
- 6 Allow the bark to set completely in the refrigerator, about 30 minutes. Once hardened, break into pieces as large or as small as you want.

MAKING BARK

- ❖ Some candy makers may tell you to temper chocolate for making bark, but I opt to simply melt it without tempering. I prefer this approach because my bark recipes—with the exception of Peanut Butter Chocolate Swirl Bark (page 68)—call for two types of chocolate, and tempering two chocolates would add a lot of time to the endeavor; not only does the tempering process itself take more time, but both chocolates would need to set at room temperature since tempered chocolate should not be refrigerated. That said, if you have the time, you may certainly temper the chocolate!
- ❖ Bark made with melted chocolate is typically poured out onto a large baking sheet and placed in the refrigerator to set. Before beginning a bark recipe, make sure you have room in your refrigerator for the baking sheet.
- ❖ Do not use chocolate chips for making bark. For the best taste and texture, it's important to use quality chocolate. Bark has so few ingredients that pure chocolate really makes a huge difference!





CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE BARK

Prep time: 1 hour, 5 minutes

Total time: 3 hours, 25 minutes

Makes: about 1 pound (454g) bark and 30–32 cookies

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

6 tbsp ($\frac{1}{4}$ stick; 85g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (110g) light brown sugar, packed

1 egg yolk

1 tsp (5ml) vanilla extract

1 cup (125g) all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking soda

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (87g) mini chocolate chips

BARK

8oz (227g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

8oz (227g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped

2 tbsp mini chocolate chips

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

2 large baking sheets

double boiler (optional)

I've never been more certain of the world's love for chocolate chip cookies. The most popular recipe on my blog is for this iconic dessert, so you knew I'd sneak at least one in here (or two, see page 174). Here's a new way to enjoy cookies—crushed up and pressed into chocolate bark. I made the cookies from scratch by altering my favorite recipe to bake a smaller batch. You'll have some leftovers, but I don't think you'll hear any complaints!

- 1 **Make the cookies:** Using a handheld mixer or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter in a large bowl for 1 minute on medium speed until completely smooth and creamy. Add the brown sugar and beat on medium-high speed until fluffy and light in color. Beat in the egg yolk and vanilla on high speed until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed.
- 2 Whisk the flour, baking soda, and salt together in a medium bowl until combined. On low speed, slowly mix the dry mixture into the wet ingredients until combined. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (87g) chocolate chips and mix on low for about 5–10 seconds until evenly disbursed. Cover dough tightly with aluminum foil or plastic wrap and chill for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 day. Chilling for the short period of time prevents the cookies from spreading in the oven. As the cookies are chilling, preheat the oven to 325°F (170°C) and line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 3 Once chilled, remove the cookie dough from the refrigerator. Scoop and roll balls of dough, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons of dough each (yes, teaspoons—these are small cookies), and place on the baking sheets. Bake the small cookies in batches for 10–11 minutes, until slightly golden brown around the edges. The baked cookies will look soft in the center when you remove them from the oven. Allow to cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheet, then transfer to cooling rack to cool completely. Once cooled completely, break 10–12 cookies into pieces to use for the bark. Save the rest for your cookie jar!
- 4 **Make the bark:** Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside.
- 5 Melt the semi-sweet chocolate (see page 44). Pour onto the prepared baking sheet and spread into an even layer with a rubber spatula. Refrigerate for 20 minutes, or until it has almost completely set. If it sets completely, the bark layers could separate.
- 6 During this time, melt the white chocolate (see page 44). Once melted, pour over the semi-sweet chocolate layer and spread into an even layer. Press chocolate chip cookie pieces into the top of the bark so they adhere. Sprinkle the bark with 2 tablespoons of mini chocolate chips.
- 7 Allow the bark to set completely in the refrigerator, about 30 minutes. Once hardened, break into pieces as large or as small as you want.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store bark in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week. During warmer months, I like to keep bark in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks for a cold treat.

CANDY CANE BARK

Prep time: 45 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Makes: about 1 pound (454g)

INGREDIENTS

8oz (227g) white chocolate,
coarsely chopped

1 tsp vegetable, coconut,
or canola oil, divided

½ tsp peppermint extract, divided

8oz (227g) semi-sweet chocolate,
coarsely chopped

3 large candy canes, crushed

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

large baking sheet

double boiler (optional)

It's not the holidays without a batch of this double chocolate candy cane-loaded bark. This is one of the easiest, most festive desserts you can make around Christmas. It's as easy as eating a slice of pie—not to be confused with “easy as pie,” because I don't think pies are typically very easy to make. I'm rambling. Are you still reading? Anyway, if you plan to gift this irresistible bark to loved ones around the holidays, make sure you include a pair of stretch pants, too. It's the polite thing to do.

- 1 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside.
- 2 Melt the white chocolate with half of the oil (see page 44). Remove from heat and stir in half of the peppermint extract.
- 3 Pour melted white chocolate onto the prepared baking sheet and spread into an even layer with a rubber spatula. Refrigerate for 20 minutes, or until it has almost completely set. If it sets completely, the bark layers could separate.
- 4 During this time, melt the semi-sweet chocolate and remaining oil (see page 44). Remove from heat and stir in remaining peppermint extract. Pour the semi-sweet chocolate over the white chocolate layer and spread into an even layer. Sprinkle with crushed candy canes.
- 5 Allow the bark to set completely in the refrigerator, about 30 minutes. Once hardened, break into pieces as large or as small as you want.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store bark in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week. During warmer months, I like to keep bark in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks for a cold treat.



SALLY SAYS: Crush your candy canes the easy way. Place them in a large zipped-top bag, seal, and roll your rolling pin over the bag until crushed.





PEANUT BUTTER CHOCOLATE SWIRL BARK

Prep time: 45 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 5 minutes

Makes: about 1 pound (454g)

INGREDIENTS

8oz (227g) semi-sweet chocolate,
coarsely chopped

1 cup (170g) peanut butter chips

1 tbsp creamy peanut butter

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

large baking sheet

double boiler (optional)

If you follow my blog, you probably already know that I am **OBSESSED** with peanut butter and chocolate. Together. Forever. And this recipe might just be the easiest way to enjoy these soul mates, um, I mean flavors, together. What I love most about this bark, besides the scrumptious flavor, is how gorgeous the swirls are! No need to be particular about making the swirls, their haphazardness adds to the bark's charm.

- 1 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside.
- 2 Melt the semi-sweet chocolate (see page 44). Set aside.
- 3 Combine the peanut butter chips and peanut butter in a small heatproof bowl. Melt in the microwave at 50 percent power in 20-second increments, stirring after each increment, until completely smooth and melted.
- 4 Pour chocolate onto the prepared baking sheet, spreading with a rubber spatula into a smooth layer. Drizzle melted peanut butter mixture in parallel lines on top of chocolate. Run a toothpick or knife through the two layers to form swirls.
- 5 Allow the bark to set completely in the refrigerator, about 30 minutes. Once hardened, break into pieces as large or as small as you want.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store bark in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week. During warmer months, I like to keep bark in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks for a cold treat.



ENDLESS TRUFFLES

As I sat down to write this chapter, I thought about everything I love to pair with chocolate: red wine, mint, hazelnuts, coffee, cheese . . . and I created truffle recipes for nearly all of them. (Sorry, there is no chocolate cheese truffle recipe in this cookbook. I'm still working on it!)

Don't let the sophisticated look of truffles fool you. Once you understand what you're doing, they are by far one of the easiest candies to make at home. Essentially, all you have to do is combine chocolate and cream. Once this mixture—called “ganache”—is smooth, it is set aside to “cure,” or firm up, so that it's easy to roll. Now that you know what a truffle is, let me give you some tips on making them.

THE BEGINNING: Always start your truffle making with a dry work surface. Be extremely cautious about this, because even a drop of water can turn the chocolate into a thick, grainy mess. This is called seizing and you don't want that to happen! I recommend using a large glass mixing bowl for truffle making. The chocolate used in truffles should be high quality. For sensational truffles, begin with sensational chocolate. Please refer to page 42 for my preferred brands. The chocolate should be chopped into small, fairly uniform pieces to ensure that it will melt quickly and evenly. As you'll notice in my chocolate truffle recipes, I like to briefly warm the chocolate before it is mixed with the cream to help initiate the melting process.

SOME SCIENCE: Speaking of the melting process, do you know what an emulsion is? It's a mixture of two incompatible liquids, such as oil and water, that do not dissolve into each other. The ganache you prepare in chocolate truffle recipes is an emulsion: oil from the

cocoa butter; water from the cream. Mixing the two together requires some love and tenderness. Stir the ganache with gentle force in one circular direction as the warm cream combines with the chocolate. Too much agitation can introduce air bubbles and break the emulsion, leaving you with an oil film on the surface of the ganache after it sets. It's not pretty.

A CURVEBALL: White chocolate-filled truffles are a completely different story. Due to its higher fat and sugar content, white chocolate melts more easily and at a lower temperature than regular chocolate. I never warm white chocolate before mixing it with the cream. However, like regular chocolate, the white chocolate you use for filling truffles—such as Chai Tea Latte Truffles (page 86) and Lemon Cream Pie Truffles (page 89)—should be of high quality and chopped into small uniform pieces. You'll also still need a dry work surface when you begin.

THE ROLLING: Ganache filling is soft. A little softness makes a creamier truffle, but it also makes rolling a little tricky, not to mention messy. To make this process easier and neater, wipe your hands clean with a paper towel in between rolling each truffle. Most of the ganache fillings in this chapter begin setting at room temperature, then finish setting in the refrigerator. For truffles you are dipping in chocolate, do not refrigerate the ganache fillings longer than what the recipe states, as doing so will make for a much-too-

firm and cold center, which could cause the chocolate surface to dry with a dull or cracked finish. If you find the ganache filling to be too soft, roll it into ball shapes as best you can, place the balls onto a lined baking sheet, and let them sit out at room temperature to briefly dry. Then try rolling them into neater balls—they will be much easier to work with at this point.

LET’S TALK DECORATION: One of the best parts about truffle making is the assortment of fun decorating options. A roll in cocoa, a topping of nuts, a coating of sprinkles, and a dip in chocolate. Yep, you can do it all! Dipping in chocolate is the most time-consuming option. One question I’m asked often is how I get dipped truffles to look so neat and professional. First of all, thank you for saying that. Second of all, it’s through

practice! Flip back to “Chocolate: Tempering, Melting, and Dipping” on page 45 for dipping tips.

TO TEMPER OR NOT TO TEMPER: If the thought of tempering chocolate makes you want to throw your hands up altogether, don’t fret. Tempered chocolate will give the coating a beautiful shine and snap upon biting, but it isn’t mandatory. If you don’t mind storing your truffles in the refrigerator, you can simply use melted (and not tempered) chocolate. For more information about tempering, see page 42.

SHARING IS CARING: The recipes in this chapter yield a feast of truffles. I have two reasons for this: good luck eating just one and who doesn’t love receiving a box of homemade truffles? These chocolate treats are perfect for making ahead and gift-giving.

AHEAD OF THE GAME

If you’re planning to make truffles ahead of time for the holidays or other events, here are some helpful make-ahead tips:

- ❖ If you coat the truffles in chocolate (tempered or not), allow the coating to set, then layer the truffles between sheets of parchment or wax paper in an airtight container. You can put the truffles into mini cupcake/muffin liners if you like.
- ❖ If you use tempered chocolate, store the truffles in the manner described above at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week. Do not freeze truffles coated in tempered chocolate. Rather, freeze the uncoated balls between sheets of parchment or wax paper in an airtight container; thaw overnight in the refrigerator and then coat before serving.
- ❖ If you decide to simply use melted chocolate that has not been tempered, store the truffles in the manner described in tip number 1 in the refrigerator for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 2 months. Frozen truffles can be thawed overnight in the refrigerator before serving, though coated truffles straight from the freezer are equally delicious!
- ❖ If you make truffles that are not coated in chocolate, like Red Wine Truffles (page 81) or Lemon Cream Pie Truffles (page 89), store and freeze them by following the instructions for truffles coated in chocolate that has not been tempered.



SIMPLY CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

Prep time: 1 hour
Total time: 5 hours, 30 minutes
Makes: 60 truffles

FILLING

7oz (198g) bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

7oz (198g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

¾ cup (180ml) heavy cream

½ tsp vanilla extract

2 tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature and quartered

COATING

16oz (454g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

double boiler (optional)

large baking sheet

dipping tool (optional)

Simple and satisfying, these chocolate truffles are beyond belief. They're as creamy as New York cheesecake and as chocolaty as a pan of brownies. Be sure to read all of my tips on page 71 before starting.

- 1 Make the filling: Place the bittersweet chocolate and semi-sweet chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Microwave on 50 percent power in four 15-second increments, stirring after each, for a total of 60 seconds. Stir until almost completely melted. Set aside.
- 2 Pour heavy cream into a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisking occasionally, heat until it just begins to boil. Remove from heat, whisk in the vanilla extract, and pour over the chocolate. Gently begin stirring with a wooden spoon in one direction. Do not forcefully stir. Once the chocolate and cream are completely smooth, gently stir in the butter until melted and combined. Cover with plastic wrap pressed on the top of the mixture. Let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, then transfer to the refrigerator for 3–4 hours, or just until it reaches scoopable consistency (see photo, below left).
- 3 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside. Remove ganache from the refrigerator. Measure 1 teaspoon, roll between your hands into a ball, and place on the baking sheet. Repeat with the rest of the ganache. Place the truffles in the refrigerator as you prepare the coating.
- 4 Make the coating: Melt or temper the semi-sweet chocolate (see page 42).
- 5 Remove truffles from the refrigerator. Working with one truffle at a time, dip completely into the chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). Place back onto the baking sheet. Repeat with rest of truffles. Drizzle any leftover melted or tempered chocolate with a squeeze bottle (or fork) over truffles. Allow the chocolate to completely set at room temperature before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Ahead of the Game* (page 72).



SALLY SAYS: For dark chocolate truffles, use all bittersweet chocolate.





MINT TRUFFLES

Prep time: 1 hour
Total time: 5 hours, 30 minutes
Makes: 60 truffles

FILLING

- 14oz (397g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- ¾ cup (180ml) heavy cream
- 1 tsp peppermint extract
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature and quartered

COATING

- 14oz (397g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1 drop green food coloring
- 6oz (170g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- large baking sheet
- double boiler (optional)
- dipping tool (optional)

Here we meet chocolate's second soul mate (its first soul mate starts with "p" and ends with "eanut butter"): cool, creamy mint. The ganache filling is similar to that in *Simply Chocolate Truffles* (page 74), except all semi-sweet chocolate is used to deliciously complement the peppermint extract. The coating is made from white chocolate and a touch of green food coloring. This can be replaced with 14 ounces (397g) of green candy coating. Be sure to read all of my tips on page 71 before starting.

- 1 Make the filling: Place the semi-sweet chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Microwave on 50 percent power in four 15-second increments, stirring after each, for a total of 60 seconds. Stir until almost completely melted. Set aside.
- 2 Pour heavy cream in a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisking occasionally, heat until it just begins to boil. Remove from heat, whisk in the peppermint extract, and pour over the chocolate. Gently begin stirring with a wooden spoon in one direction. Do not forcefully stir. Once the chocolate and cream are completely smooth, gently stir in the butter until melted and combined. Cover with plastic wrap pressed on the top of the mixture. Let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, then transfer to the refrigerator for 3–4 hours, or just until it reaches scoopable consistency.
- 3 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside. Remove ganache from the refrigerator. Measure 1 teaspoon, roll between your hands into a ball, and place on the baking sheet. Repeat with the rest of the ganache. Place the truffles in the refrigerator as you prepare the coating.
- 4 Make the coating: Melt or temper the white chocolate (see page 42). Stir in the food coloring.
- 5 Remove truffles from the refrigerator. Working with one truffle at a time, dip completely into the white chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). Place back onto the baking sheet. Repeat with remaining truffles. Melt or temper the semi-sweet chocolate. With a squeeze bottle (or fork) drizzle over truffles. Allow the chocolate to completely set at room temperature before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Ahead of the Game* (page 72).



SALLY SAYS: Avoid using mint extract; I find it resembles the taste of spearmint toothpaste more than anything else. Peppermint extract has that wonderful cool mint flavor, which pairs perfectly with chocolate.

DARK CHOCOLATE MOCHA TRUFFLES

Prep time: 1 hour

Total time: 5 hours, 30 minutes

Makes: 40 truffles

FILLING

8oz (227g) bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

¾ cup (180ml) heavy cream

1 tbsp instant coffee granules or 1 tsp instant espresso

½ tsp vanilla extract

COATING

10oz (283g) bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

6oz (170g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped

40 coffee beans, for garnish (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

large baking sheet

double boiler (optional)

dipping tool (optional)

For the deepest, darkest chocolate experience, indulge in a couple of these mocha truffles. Cream is heated with instant coffee and then mixed with vanilla extract and bittersweet chocolate to create a rich mocha-flavored ganache. This ganache's smell, by the way, will seduce you. Each truffle is then enveloped in even more chocolate, drizzled with white chocolate, and finished off with a coffee bean (this last touch can be omitted if you prefer). Eating one of these truffles is like wearing a cocktail dress to a casual Wednesday lunch; you can't help but feel fancy.

- 1 Make the filling: Place bittersweet chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Microwave on 50 percent power in three 15-second increments, stirring after each, for a total of 45 seconds. Stir until almost completely melted. Set aside.
- 2 Whisk the heavy cream and instant coffee together in a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisking occasionally, heat until it just begins to boil. Remove from heat, whisk in the vanilla extract, and pour over the chocolate. Gently begin stirring with a wooden spoon in one direction. Do not forcefully stir. Once the mixture is completely smooth, cover with plastic wrap pressed on the top of the mixture. Let ganache mixture sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, then transfer to the refrigerator for 3–4 hours, or until it reaches scoopable consistency.
- 3 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside. Remove ganache from the refrigerator. Measure 1 teaspoon, roll between your hands into a ball, and place on the baking sheet. Repeat with rest of ganache. Place the truffles in the refrigerator as you prepare the coating.
- 4 Make the coating: Melt or temper the bittersweet chocolate (see page 42).
- 5 Remove truffles from the refrigerator. Working with one truffle at a time, dip completely into the chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). Place back onto the baking sheet. Repeat with rest of truffles.
- 6 Melt or temper the white chocolate. With a squeeze bottle (or fork) drizzle over truffles. Press a coffee bean on top of each. Allow the chocolate to completely set at room temperature before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Ahead of the Game* (page 72).





RED WINE TRUFFLES

Prep time: 1 hour
Total time: 5 hours
Makes: 60 truffles

INGREDIENTS

16oz (454g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

1 cup (240ml) heavy cream

½ cup (180ml) red wine (I prefer pinot noir or cabernet sauvignon)

1 tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature and halved

¾ cup (65g) natural unsweetened or Dutch-process cocoa powder

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

large baking sheet

With a glass of red wine in one hand and a piece of dark chocolate in the other, all is right in my world. I recently visited a gourmet chocolate shop, and before I knew it, I was ordering a box of their wildly popular pinot noir truffles. I mean, really, can it get any better? The answer is YES—making them at home. You're only four easy steps away from boozy chocolate luxury.

- 1 Place the semi-sweet chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Microwave on 50 percent power in four 15-second increments, stirring after each, for a total of 60 seconds. Stir until almost completely melted. Set aside.
- 2 Pour heavy cream in a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisking occasionally, heat until it just begins to boil. Remove from heat and pour over the chocolate. Gently begin stirring with a wooden spoon in one direction. Do not forcefully stir. Once the chocolate and cream are completely smooth, gently stir in the wine and butter until combined. Cover with plastic wrap pressed on the top of the mixture. Let ganache mixture sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, then transfer to the refrigerator for 3–4 hours, or until it reaches a soft, scoopable consistency.
- 3 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside. Pour cocoa powder into a bowl.
- 4 Remove ganache from the refrigerator. Measure 1 teaspoon, roll between your hands into a ball, roll in the cocoa powder, and place on the baking sheet. Repeat with rest of ganache. For pretty presentation, I roll some truffles more heavily in the cocoa than others. Serve immediately or cover tightly and chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve. I like them best served cold.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Ahead of the Game* (page 72).

NUTELLA® TRUFFLES

Prep time: 1 hour

Total time: 5 hours, 30 minutes

Makes: 40 truffles

FILLING

8oz (227g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

½ cup (120ml) heavy cream

⅓ cup (100g) Nutella®

2 tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature and quartered

COATING

½ cup finely chopped raw hazelnuts

10oz (283g) milk chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

large baking sheet

double boiler (optional)

dipping tool (optional)

The first time I ever tried Nutella® was in high school. There, in my chunky ribbed turtleneck sweater or whatever I thought was cool at age fifteen, I melted into a pool of chocolate love. And besides my fashion choices, not much has changed. What better way to eat Nutella® than packed inside a smooth chocolate truffle? For the perfect complement and added crunch, sprinkle with toasted hazelnuts. I recommend keeping a large jar of Nutella® on hand because you'll be making these truffles often!

- 1 Make the filling: Place the semi-sweet chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Microwave on 50 percent power in three 15-second increments, stirring after each, for a total of 45 seconds. Stir until almost completely melted. Set aside.
- 2 Pour heavy cream in a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisking occasionally, heat until it just begins to boil. Remove from heat and pour over the chocolate. Gently begin stirring with a wooden spoon in one direction. Do not forcefully stir. Once the chocolate and cream are completely smooth, gently stir in the Nutella® and butter until combined. Cover with plastic wrap pressed on the top of the mixture. Let ganache mixture sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, then transfer to the refrigerator for 3–4 hours or until it reaches a soft, scoopable consistency.
- 3 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside. Remove ganache from the refrigerator. Measure 1 teaspoon, roll between your hands into a ball, and place on the baking sheet. Repeat with rest of ganache. Place the truffles in the refrigerator as you prepare the coating.
- 4 Make the coating: Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Line another large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Spread hazelnuts on top and toast for 8 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, melt or temper the milk chocolate (see page 42).
- 5 Remove truffles from the refrigerator. Working with one truffle at a time, dip completely into the chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). Place back onto the baking sheet and sprinkle with toasted hazelnuts. Repeat with rest of truffles. Allow the chocolate to completely set at room temperature before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Ahead of the Game* (page 72).





GANACHE-FILLED CHOCOLATES

Prep time: 1 hour

Total time: 7 hours, 45 minutes

Yield: 36 x 1½-in (3.75cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

32oz (907g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped and divided

¾ cup (180ml) heavy cream

2 tsp light corn syrup

1 tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

½ cup coarsely chopped raw unsalted nuts (optional; see *Sally Says*, below)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

9-in (23cm) square baking pan

double boiler (optional)

dipping tool (optional)

squeeze bottle (optional)

If you're a chocolate lover who chooses the creamy chocolate-filled chocolates out of the chocolate box, this chocolate-packed recipe has your name written all over it. How many times in one sentence can I say chocolate? And how much chocolate can we pack into one tiny square? The answer to both is A LOT. Try using all milk chocolate or bittersweet chocolate in these candies instead of semi-sweet. Or go wild and use a combination of all three!

- 1 Line a 9-in (23cm) square baking pan with parchment paper leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the mixture once the chocolate filling has set. Set aside.
- 2 Place 14 ounces (397g) of the chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Microwave on 50 percent power in four 15-second increments, stirring after each, for a total of 60 seconds. Stir until almost completely melted. Set aside.
- 3 Whisk the heavy cream and corn syrup together in a small saucepan over medium heat, then bring to a boil. Once boiling, pour hot cream mixture over the chocolate. Gently begin stirring with a wooden spoon in one direction. Do not forcefully stir. Once the chocolate mixture is completely smooth, gently stir in the butter until combined. Cover with plastic wrap pressed on the top of the mixture. Let ganache sit at room temperature for 5–6 hours—overnight is okay. After this time, if you find the mixture is not firm enough to cut into squares, refrigerate for 1 hour, then let sit at room temperature for 10 minutes before moving on to the next step.
- 4 Once set, remove from the pan by lifting out the parchment paper, invert onto a large cutting board, peel away the parchment paper, and turn back over. Using a large sharp knife, cut into 1½-in (3.75cm) squares and place each square onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Place the squares in the refrigerator as you prepare the coating.
- 5 Melt or temper the remaining chocolate (see page 42). Next, remove squares from the refrigerator and dip each completely into the chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). Place each coated square back onto the lined baking sheet. Drizzle any remaining chocolate over coated squares with a squeeze bottle (or fork). Allow squares to completely set at room temperature before serving.



SALLY SAYS: For extra texture and flavor, I love using chopped walnuts or hazelnuts in these creamy squares. Almonds, peanuts, and pecans are other tasty options. You can also leave the chocolates nut-free.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Layer squares between sheets of parchment or wax paper and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator (if chocolate is not tempered) for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 2 months, or at room temperature in a cool, dry place (if chocolate is tempered) for up to 1 week.

CHAI TEA LATTE TRUFFLES

Prep time: 1 hour
Total time: 7 hours, 45 minutes
Makes: 60 truffles

FILLING

- 14oz (397g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped
- ¾ cup (180ml) heavy cream
- ¾ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp ground cardamom
- ¼ tsp ground cloves
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

COATING

- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tbsp (25g) sugar
- 18oz (510g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- double boiler (optional)
- dipping tool (optional)

Welcome to the pièce de résistance of this entire chapter. What makes these truffles so remarkable is the ganache filling. White chocolate is much softer and creamier than regular chocolate and therefore makes one velvety smooth filling. Cream is heated with spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, and cloves to produce a bold and aromatic spiced chai flavor that pairs perfectly with white chocolate. And when all of the ingredients come together? It tastes like a bite-size chocolate-covered chai latte!

- 1 Make the filling: Place white chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Set aside.
- 2 Pour heavy cream in a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in the cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, and cloves. Whisking occasionally, heat until the cream just begins to boil. Remove from heat and whisk in the vanilla extract. Pour hot mixture over the white chocolate. Gently begin stirring with a wooden spoon in one direction. Do not forcefully stir. Once the mixture is completely smooth, cover with plastic wrap pressed on the top of the mixture. Let sit at room temperature for 1 hour, then transfer to the refrigerator for 5–6 more hours. After chilling, the ganache mixture will be smooth and a little soft, but still manageable by hand.
- 3 Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside. Remove ganache from the refrigerator. Measure 1 teaspoon, roll between your hands into a ball, and place on the baking sheet. Repeat with remaining ganache.
- 4 Make the coating: Combine the cinnamon and sugar in a small bowl. Set aside. Melt or temper the semi-sweet chocolate (see page 42).
- 5 Line another baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Remove 1–2 truffles from the refrigerator, keeping the rest chilled. Working with one truffle at a time, dip completely into the chocolate using a dipping tool (or fork). Place onto the prepared baking sheet and sprinkle lightly with the cinnamon-sugar mixture. Repeat with rest of truffles. Allow the chocolate to completely set at room temperature before serving.



SALLY SAYS: You'll find yourself in a sticky situation when handling these truffles. The ganache filling is soft and will stick to your hands as you roll. As I recommended on page 71 (The Rolling), wipe your hands with a paper towel after rolling each truffle to make the process go more smoothly. In step 5, removing only a couple truffles from the refrigerator at a time for dipping while keeping the rest chilled will allow the truffles to stay firm, which will make dunking them into the chocolate easier.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Ahead of the Game* page 72.



Cup
of
Joy





LEMON CREAM PIE TRUFFLES

Prep time: 40 minutes
Total time: 6 hours, 40 minutes
Makes: 60 truffles

INGREDIENTS

14oz (397g) white chocolate,
coarsely chopped

1 tbsp ($\frac{1}{8}$ stick; 14g) butter,
softened to room temperature

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (180ml) heavy cream

1 tsp lemon extract

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (120g) sprinkles

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 large baking sheets

MAKE-AHEAD TIP:

See *Ahead of the Game* (page 72).

With a lemon flavor as bright as their sprinkle-covered exterior, these truffles are a cheery treat. Lucky for us all, they're one of the easiest recipes in this chapter. The combination of sweet white chocolate and tart lemon reminds me of a refreshing slice of lemon cream pie (hence, the name)!

- 1 Place white chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Place the butter on top. Do not mix. Set aside.
- 2 Pour heavy cream in a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisking occasionally, heat until it just begins to boil. Remove from heat and whisk in the lemon extract. Pour hot mixture over the white chocolate. Gently begin stirring with a wooden spoon in one direction. Do not forcefully stir. Once completely smooth, cover with plastic wrap pressed on the top of the mixture. Let sit at room temperature for 1 hour, then transfer to the refrigerator for 5–6 more hours. After chilling, the ganache mixture will be smooth and a little soft, but still manageable by hand.
- 3 Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Pour sprinkles into a bowl. Set aside.
- 4 Measure 1 teaspoon of ganache, roll between your hands into a ball, then roll in the sprinkles (see photo, below). Place on the baking sheet. Repeat with rest of ganache. Serve immediately or cover tightly and chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve. I like them best served cold.





CARAMEL, TOFFEE, AND BRITTLE

This chapter can only be described as candy heaven. It's home to some of the more challenging recipes in this book, but also some of the tastiest. And approachable! Think caramel apples, buttery toffee, and crunchy brittle. While caramel, toffee, and brittle are all different types of candy, they are very similar with regard to preparation. Because these recipes can get a little tricky, let me prep you with as many tips and tricks as I can.

CARAMEL: Caramel is cooked sugar and cream (or milk) with a little butter for flavor. Out of the three types of candies, caramel is cooked to the lowest temperature to obtain moisture and softness.

TOFFEE: One difference between caramel and toffee is the moisture content when they are finished cooking; toffee is cooked to a higher temperature, so more of the moisture cooks off and you're left with a delicious buttery crunch. Also, while caramel is made with cream and a little butter, toffee is often made with just butter. A lot of it. Due to the large amount, butter can sometimes separate and create a slick, oily layer on top of the cooking candy or the finished candy. Here are some ways you can prevent this from happening:

avoid temperature shifts, keep the pan on medium heat, use a thick-bottomed pan, and stir when the recipe instructs you to.

BRITTLE: Brittle is cooked to the highest temperature of these three candies and therefore is the most brittle (get it?). Brittle is less dense than toffee. It contains baking soda, which helps give the candy a light and airy texture. If your brittle is too soft and sticky, there is too much moisture in the candy. This can be caused by humidity in the air or undercooking the candy. Soft brittle cannot be hardened after the candy-making process. To prevent it? Avoid cooking brittle in a high-humidity environment, and make sure you are following the recipe and proper temperature readings.

TIPS FOR COOKING EACH

- ❖ Fast doesn't always win the race. Cook these candies at medium heat. A gradual rise in temperature prevents scorching.
- ❖ Do not use a thin saucepan. Every single candy recipe in this book that is cooked to a high temperature is cooked in a 3-quart (2.8L) thick-bottomed saucepan. Thin saucepans do not conduct heat evenly and may have hot spots where portions of the candy can scorch.
- ❖ If your candy is too hard and brittle, it has been cooked too long. This is why a candy thermometer is essential to your candy's success.
- ❖ Gritty- and grainy-tasting candy is the result of crystallization. I urge you to review *Sally's Candy-Making Basics* on page 16 before starting.
- ❖ Read through the recipe in full before starting. This will help you know the what, where, when, and how, which in turn, will help guarantee candy success.
- ❖ Have your ingredients ready. This is important because certain ingredients (such as butter, baking soda, and nuts) are stirred into the candy at certain temperature points. Have those ingredients measured and next to the stove.



CARAMEL FOR DIPPING

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 45 minutes (includes cooling)

Makes: about 2 cups (475ml)

INGREDIENTS

- 1¾ cups (415ml) heavy cream
- 2 cups (440g) light brown sugar, packed
- ¾ cup (180ml) light corn syrup
- 2 tbs (¼ stick; 28g) unsalted butter, slightly softened
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- pastry brush
- candy thermometer

This is my prized caramel recipe that I always use for dipping. Its flavor is sweet and concentrated, but not overpowering. I use this specific caramel in several recipes in this cookbook, including Caramel Turtles (page 94), Caramel Apples (page 96), Loaded Caramel Pretzels (page 98), and Twix® Caramel Fudge (page 154). I'm pretty sure caramel goes with just about anything, right?! For a thinner caramel sauce perfect for drizzling, see Easy Caramel Sauce on page 162 (Snickers® Cheesecake).

- 1 Combine the cream, brown sugar, corn syrup, butter, and salt in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan. Using a wooden spoon, stir constantly as the butter melts and the sugar dissolves. The mixture will be thick, cloudy, and dull-looking.
- 2 Once melted, bring the mixture to a boil without stirring. Once boiling, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 3 Cook the caramel until it reaches 235°F (113°C; soft ball stage). When it hits that temperature, begin stirring lightly once every minute. If any candy splashes up the side of the pan, brush it off with the pastry brush. The caramel will begin to thicken. As soon as the caramel reaches 250°F (121°C; hard ball stage), remove pan from the heat and immediately stir in the vanilla extract.
- 4 Set the caramel aside to cool for 10–15 minutes and then pour into a glass jar. If not using right away, let cool, uncovered, to room temperature before covering and refrigerating. The caramel will thicken as it cools.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store the caramel in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. Warm in the microwave or on the stove before using.

CARAMEL TURTLES

Prep time: 1 hour, 45 minutes (includes cooking the caramel)

Total time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Makes: 48 turtles

INGREDIENTS

4 cups (396g) pecan halves

2 cups (475ml; the full recipe)
Caramel for Dipping (page 92)

8oz (227g) semi-sweet chocolate,
coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 large baking sheets

double boiler (optional)

These chocolate caramel treats are my mom's absolute favorite dessert on the planet. While I turned up my nose at chocolate turtles when I was younger (pecans? yuck!), I'm all about these caramel-packed treats today. The candies get their cutesy name from their resemblance to the animal. I can eat quite a few of these homemade sweets in one sitting, and when paired with a warm cup of coffee, they're almost impossible to pass up!

- 1 Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Arrange 48 clusters of 4 pecan halves each with 1 inch (2.5cm) of space between clusters (see photo, below). Set aside.
- 2 Spoon 2 teaspoons (10ml) of the caramel onto the center of each pecan cluster. Let the caramel cool completely to room temperature, about 30 minutes.
- 3 Melt or temper the chocolate (see page 42). Spoon 1 teaspoon of chocolate over the caramel on each turtle, then allow chocolate to completely set in the refrigerator for 30 minutes (if chocolate is not tempered) or at room temperature for 45 minutes (if chocolate is tempered).

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Layer turtles between sheets of parchment or wax paper and store in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks.



SALLY SAYS: If you're making the Caramel for Dipping just before making the turtles, you can arrange the pecan clusters during the 10–15 minutes required for the caramel to cool after you stir in the vanilla extract.







CARAMEL APPLES

Prep time: 2 hours (includes cooking the caramel)

Total time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Makes: 8–10 apples

INGREDIENTS

8–10 apples, at room temperature

2 cups (475ml; the full recipe)

Caramel for Dipping (page 92)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

8–10 lollipop or ice pop sticks

2 large baking sheets

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Wrap the caramel apples individually in cellophane or plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. Remove from the refrigerator about an hour before eating to soften the caramel.

Caramel and apples are just made for each other! When I sat down to write this cookbook, I knew I had to include this quintessential fall treat. And what might be even more fun than eating caramel apples is adding festive toppings to them, especially if you have a big group working together. See the suggestions in *To Top It Off* below to get some inspiration, as well as valuable how-to info. For the apples, use your favorite variety. I prefer tart Granny Smith apples, which provide a refreshing contrast to the sweetness of the caramel.

- 1 Wash the apples with warm water to get rid of any wax coating, then dry thoroughly and remove stems. With light force, insert a lollipop or ice pop stick into the core of each apple. Make sure it is very secure. Set apples aside. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 2 Using the stick to hold the apple and working with one apple at a time, quickly dip each apple halfway into the slightly warm yet thick caramel. Use a spoon to help get the caramel onto the apple, if needed. Allow excess caramel to drip off by holding the apple sideways and spinning it. If you find that the caramel is too thick and has cooled down too much as you are working, warm it back up on the stove for 2–3 minutes, stirring constantly, then continue dipping.
- 3 Allow caramel (as well as any chocolate and/or other toppings—see *To Top It Off*, below) to set completely on prepared baking sheets, about 30 minutes, before serving.

TO TOP IT OFF

Get creative! Here are some yummy suggestions for enhancing both the look and taste of your caramel apples. If you will not be using melted chocolate, roll the apples in your topping of choice right after completing step 3 in the recipe; after rolling each apple, hold it upright for about 1 minute, then place onto one of the prepared baking sheets. If you will be adding melted chocolate to your apples, let the caramel coating cool completely before dipping in or drizzling with chocolate.

- ❖ **TURTLE APPLES:** Dip one-quarter of the way in 8oz (227g) melted semi-sweet or white chocolate, then roll in 1 cup (109g) finely chopped pecans.
- ❖ **COOKIES 'N' CREAM APPLES:** Dip one-quarter of the way in 8oz (227g) melted white chocolate, then roll in 1 cup (100g) crushed Oreos®.
- ❖ **RAINBOW APPLES:** Roll in 1 cup (160g) rainbow sprinkles.
- ❖ **BUTTERFINGER® APPLES:** Dip one-quarter of the way in 8oz (227g) melted milk chocolate, then roll in 1 cup (125g) crushed Butterfingers®.
- ❖ **M&M'S® APPLES:** Press M&M's® into warm caramel. Use 1–2 cups (208–416g) depending on how many you would like on each apple.
- ❖ **CHOCOLATE CARAMEL APPLES:** Drizzle with 8oz (227g) melted semi-sweet or white chocolate.



SALLY SAYS:

If you're making the Caramel for Dipping right before dipping the apples, allow it to cool for 5–8 minutes after removing from heat and keep the caramel in the pan. If you're warming up already-made Caramel for Dipping, simply warm it on the stove for about 5 minutes, stirring constantly.

LOADED CARAMEL PRETZELS

Prep time: 1 hour, 25 minutes (includes cooking the caramel)

Total time: 2 hours, 25 minutes

Makes: 24–28 pretzel rods

INGREDIENTS

Assorted toppings such as 3 full-size Butterfinger® candy bars, crushed;
1 cup (225g) crushed M&M's®;
1 cup (440g) finely chopped pecans
2 cups (475ml; the full recipe)
Caramel for Dipping (page 92)
24–28 pretzel rods

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 large baking sheets

There is nothing like a sweet treat with a satisfying crunch and salty bite. This loaded recipe begins with pretzel rods that are then coated in caramel and finished off with toppings, such as crushed Butterfinger® candy bars, crushed M&M's®, or even chopped pecans and chocolate for a fun spin on turtles (see step 4, below). I created this recipe with kids in mind—they will have a ball helping you decorate the pretzels with toppings. Serving suggestion: place a bunch of the finished pretzels in a few tall glasses, caramel side up, and let guests choose which topping is their dessert destiny. (I'm quite passionate about Loaded Caramel Pretzels.)

- 1 Place toppings in separate medium-size bowls or on medium-size plates. Set aside. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 2 Working with one pretzel at a time, quickly dip each pretzel halfway into the slightly warm yet thick caramel. Allow excess to drip off by very gently tapping the pretzel on the side of the measuring glass, making sure not to break the pretzel. If the caramel is too thin, allow it to sit a little longer at room temperature to thicken so that it will stick to the pretzel.
- 3 Once the pretzel is halfway coated with caramel, roll the caramel portion of the pretzel in a topping until all sides are coated. Place pretzel on the prepared baking sheet to allow caramel to set. Repeat with each pretzel. If you find that the caramel is falling off the sides of the finished pretzels as you are working, simply turn/rotate them to make sure the caramel stays put as it sets. I use about 1½ tablespoons (22ml) of caramel per pretzel, though this amount can vary slightly.
- 4 Optional: If making “turtle pretzels” as described in the recipe intro, melt 4 ounces (113g) of chocolate using my instructions on page 44; roll caramel-coated pretzels into the pecan pieces and then drizzle with melted chocolate.
- 5 Allow caramel and chocolate to completely set, about 1 hour.



SALLY SAYS: If you're making the Caramel for Dipping right before dipping the pretzels, allow it to cool for 10 minutes after removing from heat, then pour into a 2-cup (475ml) measuring glass for easy dipping. If you're warming up already-made Caramel for Dipping, simply warm it on the stove for about 5 minutes, stirring constantly.

SALLY ALSO SAYS: To crush candy bars or even chop the nuts, simply pulse in a food processor or blender until crushed. Alternatively, you can place in a large zipped-top bag and roll with a rolling pin until crushed.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store pretzels lined between sheets of parchment or wax paper in an airtight container in the refrigerator or at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week.





CHEWY CREAM CARAMELS

Prep time: 35 minutes

Total time: 4 hours, 35 minutes

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares or 32 1 x 2-in (2.5 x 5cm) rectangles

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups (355ml) heavy cream
- 1 cup (200g) sugar
- ½ cup (100g) light brown sugar
- ⅓ cup (80ml) light corn syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp (½ stick; 14g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature, plus more if using for greasing

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 8-in (20cm) square baking pan
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- pastry brush
- candy thermometer

For this recipe, I use a variation of Caramel for Dipping (page 92). While both caramels are cooked to the same temperature, I use less brown sugar and cream (both of which contain a lot of moisture) in this recipe to produce a firmer caramel that will hold its shape when cut. These incredibly chewy, creamy caramels make the perfect homemade gift. For the ultimate caramel experience, I suggest placing a piece . . . or two . . . in your mouth and letting it melt on your tongue before chewing. Talk about dreamy!

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the caramel once it has set. Lightly butter or spray with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
- 2 Combine the cream, sugar, brown sugar, and corn syrup in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan. Using a wooden spoon, stir constantly as the sugars dissolve. The mixture will be thick, cloudy, and dull-looking. Once the sugars have dissolved, turn the burner up to medium-high heat and bring the mixture to a boil without stirring. Once boiling, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 3 As the mixture boils, gently stir every 2 minutes. If any candy splashes up the sides of the pan, brush it off with the pastry brush. After you stir, do not be alarmed if the temperature temporarily drops. Once at 250°F (121°C; hard ball stage), remove the pan from heat. Quickly stir in the vanilla, salt, and butter until combined. Pour the hot caramel into the prepared baking pan and allow to cool at room temperature, uncovered, for 4 hours, or until set. I prefer letting it set overnight.
- 4 Once set, remove the caramel from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil, invert onto a cutting board, peel away foil, and turn back over. Using a sharp knife, cut into squares or rectangles.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: I suggest wrapping the caramels in wax paper or cellophane, which makes them wonderful for gift-giving and extends their shelf life. Wrapped caramels can be stored at room temperature in a cool, dry place or in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. Unwrapped caramels can be stored layered between sheets of parchment or wax paper for up to 2 weeks.

CHOCOLATE SEA-SALT CARAMELS

Prep time: 1 hour

Total time: 6 hours

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares or 32 1 x 2-in (2.5 x 5cm) rectangles

INGREDIENTS

- 1 batch Chewy Cream Caramels (page 100)
- 6 or 10oz (170 or 283g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- sea salt

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 2 large baking sheets
- double boiler (optional)
- dipping tool (optional)

For when you want a truly decadent caramel treat, this recipe takes my Chewy Cream Caramels (page 100) to the next level by dipping them in chocolate and sprinkling them with sea salt. You're welcome!

- 1 Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 2 Melt or temper the chocolate (see page 42), using 6 ounces (170g) if only coating the caramels halfway and using 10 ounces (283g) if fully coating.
- 3 Dip the Chewy Creamy Caramels one by one into the chocolate, either halfway or in full. If coating halfway, you can use your fingers to hold onto one side of the caramel as you dip the other side into the chocolate. If fully coating, use a dipping tool (or fork). After dipping, place the caramel onto one of the lined baking sheets. Sprinkle with sea salt and repeat with rest of caramels.
- 4 Allow the chocolate to completely set at room temperature for 1 hour before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: If chocolate has not been tempered, follow the make-ahead instructions for Chewy Cream Caramels on page 100. If chocolate has been tempered, layer unwrapped caramels between sheets of parchment or wax paper and store in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks. Store wrapped caramels up to 3 weeks.





SALTED ENGLISH TOFFEE

Prep time: 40 minutes
Total time: 1 hour, 15 minutes
Makes: 1 pound (454g)

INGREDIENTS

1 cup (2 sticks; 227g) unsalted butter, cubed, plus more if using for greasing
½ cup (120ml) warm water
1 cup (200g) sugar
1 tsp salt
1 tsp light corn syrup
1 cup (143g) raw unsalted almonds (optional)
6oz (170g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
sea salt, for sprinkling on top

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan or a similar-sized rimmed baking sheet
Silicone baking mat (recommended)
3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
pastry brush
candy thermometer

There is nothing, and I mean nothing (!), like homemade toffee, made from scratch on the stovetop, cooked to crumbly, crispy perfection. It's taken me quite some time to land upon the perfect balance of sweet and buttery. I like to cook toffee just until the point it reaches a wonderfully chewy stage, when placed on your tongue, it just melts away and all you taste is caramelized sugar and butter. Typical English toffee is adorned with chocolate and almonds. My version here is cooked with the almonds inside the toffee and topped with chocolate (of course) and a sprinkle of sea salt. You can leave out the almonds if you prefer.

- 1 Line a 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan with a silicone baking mat. Alternatively, lightly butter or spray with nonstick cooking spray. I do not suggest parchment paper or aluminum foil. Set aside.
- 2 Melt the cubed butter over medium heat in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan, stirring occasionally (about every 2 minutes) with a wooden spoon. Once melted, add the water, sugar, salt, and corn syrup. Stir constantly until the sugar dissolves, then brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 3 Once sugar is dissolved, stir occasionally as you bring the mixture to a boil. Once boiling, stop stirring. Rapid bubbles, a thicker consistency, and a slightly darker color form around 235°F (113°C). At 265°F (129°C; hard ball stage), stir in the almonds, if using. The mixture may separate when you add the nuts. If it does, temporarily remove the candy thermometer and stir vigorously until it all comes back together. Carefully reattach the thermometer and brush off any candy on the side of the pan with the pastry brush. Cook and stir the candy until it reaches 290°F (143°C; soft crack stage).
- 4 Remove pan from the heat and pour the toffee out onto the prepared jelly roll pan. Smooth into an even layer with a wooden spoon. The toffee should be thick and not spread all the way to the edges of the pan. Allow the toffee to cool for 5 minutes, then sprinkle the top with chocolate. Allow the chocolate to soften and melt from the heat of the toffee, then spread the melted chocolate into an even layer using a rubber spatula or the back of a spoon. Sprinkle the top with sea salt. Refrigerate for 20 minutes, or until chocolate has set.
- 5 Once set, remove toffee from the refrigerator. Cut, using a sharp knife or break into pieces as large or small as you want.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store toffee in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, freeze up to 3 months and thaw overnight in the refrigerator before serving.

WHITE CHOCOLATE MACADAMIA NUT TOFFEE

Prep time: 40 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 5 minutes

Makes: 1 pound (454g)

INGREDIENTS

1 cup (2 sticks; 227g) unsalted butter, cubed, plus more if using for greasing

½ cup (120ml) warm water

1 cup (200g) sugar

1 tsp salt

1 tsp light corn syrup

1 cup (134g) raw unsalted macadamia nuts, halved

6oz (170g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan or a similar-sized rimmed baking sheet

silicone baking mat (recommended)

3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan

pastry brush

candy thermometer

Kevin and I recently visited Hawaii on our honeymoon and while the natural beauty made me smile from ear to ear, what I loved most was the food. My favorite was a plate of macadamia nut–crusted mahi-mahi with roasted macadamia banana sauce. What inspired me to make this toffee was a cookie creation I had for dessert one night: two macadamia nut white chocolate cookies sandwiching toffee-flavored ice cream. Mind equals blown. This toffee is a salty-sweet taste of the many wonders that Hawaii has to offer.

- 1 Line a 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan with a silicone baking mat. Alternatively, lightly butter or spray with nonstick cooking spray. I do not suggest parchment paper or aluminum foil. Set aside.
- 2 Melt the cubed butter over medium heat in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan, stirring occasionally (about every 2 minutes) with a wooden spoon. Once melted, add the water, sugar, salt, and corn syrup. Stir constantly until the sugar dissolves, then brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 3 Once dissolved, stir occasionally as you bring the mixture to a boil. Once boiling, stop stirring. Rapid bubbles, a thicker consistency, and a slightly darker color form around 235°F (113°C). At 265°F (129°C; hard ball stage), stir in the macadamia nuts. The mixture may separate when you add the nuts. If it does, temporarily remove the candy thermometer and stir vigorously until it all comes back together. Carefully reattach the thermometer and brush off any candy on the side of the pan with the pastry brush. Cook and stir the candy until it reaches 290°F (143°C; soft crack stage).
- 4 Remove pan from the heat and pour the toffee out onto the prepared jelly roll pan. Smooth into an even layer with a wooden spoon. The toffee should be thick and not spread all the way to the edges of the pan. Allow the toffee to cool for 5 minutes, then sprinkle the top with white chocolate. Allow the white chocolate to soften and melt from the heat of the toffee, then spread the melted white chocolate into an even layer using a rubber spatula or the back of a spoon. Refrigerate for 20 minutes, or until white chocolate has set.
- 5 Once set, remove toffee from the refrigerator. Cut, using a sharp knife, or break into pieces as large or small as you want.



SALLY SAYS: You can buy halved macadamia nuts or you can place whole macadamia nuts in a food processor and pulse 4 or 5 times to give the nuts a very rough chop.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store toffee in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, freeze up to 3 months and thaw overnight in the refrigerator before serving.





PUMPKIN SPICE TOFFEE

Prep time: 40 minutes
Total time: 1 hour, 15 minutes
Makes: 1 pound (454g)

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups (149g) raw unsalted pecan halves, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup (2 sticks; 227g) unsalted butter, cubed, plus more if using for greasing
- ½ cup (120ml) warm water
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp (225g) sugar, divided
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp light corn syrup
- 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 6oz (170g) white chocolate, broken into small pieces
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- large baking sheet
- 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan or a similar-sized rimmed baking sheet
- silicone baking mat (recommended)
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- pastry brush
- candy thermometer

Are you a part of the pumpkin craze that hits every September and doesn't stop until Christmas? I am. In fact, I eat pumpkin all year long. This toffee screams autumn ("Autumn!"). Even though there's no actual pumpkin in this toffee, you still get all of that familiar pumpkin spice flavor. The cinnamon sugar on top is unquestionably necessary.

- 1 Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper and a 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan with a silicone baking mat or lightly butter or spray with nonstick cooking spray. Spread the chopped pecans onto the baking sheet and toast for 7–8 minutes, or until very lightly browned. Set aside.
- 2 Melt the cubed butter over medium heat in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan, stirring occasionally (about every 2 minutes) with a wooden spoon. Once melted, add the water, 1 cup (200g) of sugar, salt, and corn syrup. Stir constantly until the sugar dissolves, then brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 3 Once the sugar has dissolved, bring the mixture to a boil. Rapid bubbles, a thicker consistency, and a slightly darker color form around 235°F (113°C). Stir lightly once every minute until the candy reaches 290°F (143°C; soft crack stage).
- 4 Remove pan from the heat and stir in the pumpkin pie spice and 1 cup of the toasted pecans. Pour the toffee out onto the prepared jelly roll pan. Smooth into an even layer with a wooden spoon. The toffee should be thick and not spread all the way to the edges of the pan. Allow the toffee to cool for 5 minutes, then sprinkle the top with white chocolate. Allow the white chocolate to soften and melt from the heat of the toffee, then spread the melted white chocolate into an even layer using a rubber spatula or the back of a spoon. Sprinkle the top with remaining toasted pecans.
- 5 Quickly mix the cinnamon and remaining 2 tablespoons (25g) of sugar together in a small bowl. Sprinkle on top. Refrigerate for 20 minutes, or until white chocolate has set.
- 6 Once set, remove toffee from the refrigerator. Cut, using a sharp knife, or break into pieces as large or small as you want.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store toffee in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, freeze up to 3 months and thaw overnight in the refrigerator before serving.

EASY PRETZEL TOFFEE

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Makes: 1 pound (454g)

INGREDIENTS

8oz (½ x 1lb bag; 227g) mini pretzel twists

1 cup (2 sticks; 227g) unsalted butter, plus more if using for greasing

1 cup (220g) dark brown sugar, packed

3 cups (519g) mini chocolate chips

⅔ cup (114g) Heath® Milk Chocolate & Toffee Bits (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan or a similar-sized rimmed baking sheet

silicone baking mat (recommended)

Confession: I'm not always up for cooking toffee completely from scratch. Gasp! If you ever feel that way, here's an embarrassingly easy toffee recipe—the “busy people's toffee,” if you will. I've been making this recipe around the holidays for years, but recently, I began swapping out the pretzels for saltine crackers (when I do this, I use 1 sleeve of crackers). It sounds odd (and yes, it is), but try it—you'll forget its absurdity upon the first bite. Regardless of whether you use pretzels or crackers, do not leave off the chocolate on top; it adds another necessary level of indulgence.

- 1 Line a 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan with a silicone baking mat. Alternatively, lightly butter or spray with nonstick cooking spray. I do not suggest parchment paper or aluminum foil. Break up the pretzels into small pieces and spread them onto the prepared pan in a single layer. The key is to use broken pretzels. Set aside.
- 2 Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Combine the butter and brown sugar in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a heatproof rubber spatula or wooden spoon until the butter has completely melted and the mixture is combined. Without stirring, bring the mixture to a boil and allow to boil for 4 minutes. Remove pan from the heat and pour toffee evenly over the pretzels. Bake for 5 minutes. Do not be alarmed by its appearance when it bakes; the caramel toffee mixture will bubble and spread over the pan.
- 3 Remove from the oven and allow to cool for 3 minutes, then sprinkle with mini chocolate chips. The heat from the toffee will begin melting the chips. Using a rubber spatula or the back of a spoon, spread the melting chocolate chips into a layer over the toffee. Immediately sprinkle with toffee bits, if using. Refrigerate for 45 minutes to allow the chocolate and toffee to set.
- 4 Once set, remove from the refrigerator. Cut, using a sharp knife, or break into pieces as large or small as you want.



SALLY SAYS: I like to use mini chocolate chips because they melt more quickly on top of the toffee, which makes them easy to spread. Regular-size chocolate chips will work, as well, though.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store toffee in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, freeze up to 3 months and thaw overnight in the refrigerator before serving.





PEANUT BRITTLE

Prep time: 30 minutes
Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes
Makes: 2 pounds (907g)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (400g) sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup (240ml) light corn syrup
- ½ cup (120ml) water, room temperature
- 2 cups (290g) raw unsalted peanuts
- ¼ cup (½ stick; 57g) unsalted butter, slightly softened and quartered, plus more if using for greasing
- 1½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan or a similar-sized rimmed baking sheet
- silicone baking mat (recommended)
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- pastry brush
- candy thermometer

Peanut brittle is one of my favorite candies. (Okay, I know I have a lot of favorite candies. I don't call it an addiction for nothing!) This crunchy, but not break-your-teeth-crunchy, peanut brittle is one of the best peanut brittle recipes I've ever made. I urge you to measure and set out the butter, peanuts, baking soda, and vanilla before you begin making the recipe.

- 1 Line a 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan with a silicone baking mat. Alternatively, lightly butter or spray with nonstick cooking spray. I do not suggest parchment paper or aluminum foil. Set aside.
- 2 Combine the sugar, salt, corn syrup, and water in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until the sugar is dissolved, then brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 3 Begin stirring occasionally as you bring the candy to a boil. Once boiling, stop stirring. As the sugar cooks, the candy will go from clear on top to frothy bubbles on top. Once the candy reaches 265°F (129°C; hard ball stage), stir in the peanuts. Stir and cook the candy until it reaches 300°F (149°C; hard crack stage).
- 4 Working quickly and carefully (it's very hot!), remove candy from the heat and stir in the butter, baking soda, and vanilla. The candy will immediately foam and bubble. Pour out onto prepared baking sheet and, using 2 forks, pull the candy into a large rectangle so the peanuts are in a single even layer (see photo, below). Allow to cool completely at room temperature, about 30 minutes. Snap brittle into pieces.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store brittle in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Brittle freezes well. Break it up as directed, place into an airtight container, and freeze up to 3 months.



SALLY SAYS: Roasted peanuts can be used instead of raw. If using roasted, stir them in with the butter and baking soda at the end of cooking to prevent them from tasting burnt.



SALTED HONEY CASHEW BRITTLE

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 1 hour

Makes: about 1½ pounds (680g)

INGREDIENTS

1½ cups (300g) sugar

⅓ cup (80ml) honey

¼ tsp salt

1 tbsp water

2 tbsp unsalted butter, slightly softened and halved, plus more if using for greasing

2 cups (258g) salted, roasted cashews

½ tsp baking soda

1 tsp vanilla extract

sea salt, for sprinkling on top

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan or a similar-sized rimmed baking sheet

silicone baking mat (recommended)

3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan

pastry brush

candy thermometer

This brittle is chock-full of goodness—outstanding honey flavor and buttery cashews from corner to corner. The use of honey is not only for flavor, but it also replaces corn syrup, which is a crucial ingredient in traditional brittle recipes. Are you ready to make some sweet-and-salty brittle?! I urge you to measure and set out the butter, cashews, baking soda, and vanilla before you begin making the recipe.

- 1 Line a 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan with a silicone baking mat. Alternatively, lightly butter or spray with nonstick cooking spray. I do not suggest parchment paper or aluminum foil. Set aside.
- 2 Combine the sugar, honey, salt, and water in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon. The mixture will start out very clumpy but then melt into a liquid as the sugar dissolves. Once dissolved, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 3 Begin stirring occasionally as you bring the candy to a boil. Once boiling, stop stirring. As the sugar cooks, the candy will turn a deep amber color. To avoid scorching, begin lightly stirring the candy occasionally once it reaches 265°F (129°C; hard ball stage). Cook the candy until it reaches 305°F (152°C; hard crack stage).
- 4 Working quickly and carefully (it's hot!), remove candy from the heat and stir in the butter, cashews, baking soda, and vanilla until combined. The candy will immediately foam and bubble. Pour out onto the prepared jelly roll pan and, using 2 forks, pull the candy into a large rectangle so the cashews are in 1 even layer. Sprinkle with sea salt. Allow to cool completely at room temperature, about 30 minutes. Snap brittle into pieces.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store brittle in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Brittle freezes well. Break it up as directed, place into an airtight container, and freeze up to 3 months.





OVERLOADED CINNAMON SPICE BRITTLE

Prep time: 30 minutes
Total time: 1 hour
Makes: 2 pounds (907g)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (400g) sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup (240ml) light corn syrup
- ½ cup (120ml) water, room temperature
- ¼ cup (½ stick; 57g) unsalted butter, slightly softened and quartered, plus more if using for greasing
- 1½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 cup (143g) raw almonds
- 1 cup (130g) raw cashews
- ¾ cup (90g) dried cranberries
- ¾ cup (98g) raw pumpkin seeds (a.k.a. pepitas)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan or a similar-sized rimmed baking sheet
- silicone baking mat (recommended)
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- pastry brush
- candy thermometer

I have to be honest with you . . . this brittle exceeded my expectations and then some! I wanted to create a fun twist on Peanut Brittle (page 112) for this book, and a slew of nuts came to mind. To make it even jazzier, I threw in some dried cranberries and cinnamon. Each crunchy, buttery bite reminds me of cool fall days. I normally have a ton of self-control around desserts (well, except around page 142), but I could NOT stop grabbing piece after piece of this overloaded brittle. Just could NOT. All caps. I urge you to measure and set out the butter, baking soda, vanilla, cinnamon, nuts, cranberries, and seeds before you start making the recipe.

- 1 Line a 12 x 17-in (30 x 43cm) jelly roll pan with a silicone baking mat. Alternatively, lightly butter or spray with nonstick cooking spray. I do not suggest parchment paper or aluminum foil. Set aside.
- 2 Combine the sugar, salt, corn syrup, and water in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until the sugar is dissolved, then brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush to prevent the candy from burning there. (Alternatively, you can lightly butter the inside edges of the saucepan with butter before beginning this recipe.) Attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 3 Bring candy to a boil, stirring occasionally. Once boiling, stop stirring. As the sugar cooks, the candy will go from clear on top to frothy bubbles on top. To avoid scorching, begin lightly stirring the candy occasionally once it reaches 265°F (129°C; hard ball stage). Cook the candy until it reaches 300°F (149°C; hard crack stage).
- 4 Working quickly and carefully (it's hot!), remove candy from the heat and stir in the butter, baking soda, vanilla, cinnamon, nuts, cranberries, and pumpkin seeds until combined. The candy will immediately foam and bubble. Pour out onto prepared jelly roll pan and, using 2 forks, pull the candy into a large rectangle so the add-ins are in 1 even layer. Allow to cool completely at room temperature, about 30 minutes. Snap brittle into pieces.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store brittle in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Brittle freezes well. Break it up as directed, place into an airtight container, and freeze up to 3 months.



SALLY SAYS: If using salted nuts, omit salt in recipe.



NUTS AND SWEET TREATS

If the thought of a candy thermometer still frightens you, don't fret. You won't need it for the recipes in this chapter! The next several pages are full of easy recipes, such as candied nuts, two-ingredient peanut clusters, and puppy chow (not the dog food—don't worry).

The first half of this chapter is a little nut-heavy. I know many people cringe at the addition of nuts in brownies, cookies, and other desserts, but I love it. What's funny is that I despised nuts when I was little, often picking out nuts from my mom's oatmeal raisin walnut cookies. I also hated Brussels sprouts, but I've learned to love 'em. Not as much as nuts.

If nuts aren't your thing or if you have an allergy, all is not lost. Skip to the second half of this chapter where you'll find two variations of caramel corn (you can leave the nuts out of this one!) and a cereal bar treat that is as gooey as it is colorful. How sweet it is!

CANDIED NUTS

Prep time: 15 minutes
Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes
Makes: 6 cups (638g)

INGREDIENTS

- 5 cups (495g) pecan halves, unsalted
- 1 cup (143g) whole almonds, unsalted
- 2 large egg whites
- 2 tbsp water
- 2 cups (400g) sugar
- 2½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp salt

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 2 large baking sheets
- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment

Nuts, often praised for their healthy fats and wholesome goodness, get completely stripped of their innocent reputation here. This devilishly salty-sweet candied-nuts recipe comes from my mom's dear friend Sharyn. I can't remember a single Christmas without a bowl of these crunchy-coated nuts. Her recipe calls for only pecans, but I've added some almonds for varying texture and appearance. This treat is easy to make and even easier to polish off completely. I'm not kidding; you'll find yourself with an empty bowl in minutes. Oops.

- 1 Preheat oven to 300°F (149°C). Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or use silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 2 Mix pecans and almonds in a large bowl. Set aside. With a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, beat the egg whites with the water on high speed in a medium bowl until stiff peaks form, about 4 minutes (see photo, below). With a rubber spatula, gently fold in the sugar, cinnamon, and salt until combined.
- 3 Pour/spoon sugar mixture over nuts and stir to coat completely. Spread nuts over the prepared baking sheets and bake for 45 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes. Allow to cool completely before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store nuts in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 month. For longer storage, freeze up to 2 months; thaw overnight in the refrigerator before serving.





SEA-SALT MAPLE CINNAMON ALMONDS

Prep time: 20 minutes
Total time: 1 hour, 5 minutes
Makes: 2 cups (286g)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (286g) unsalted almonds
- ¼ cup (60ml) pure maple syrup
- 1½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp sea salt

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- large baking sheet

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store nuts in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 month. For longer storage, freeze up to 2 months; thaw overnight in the refrigerator before serving.

The day I made these salty-sweet cinnamon-spiced almonds was the day my life changed forever. A little dramatic? Ok, maybe. These little almonds may look innocent, but they pack enough mouthwatering flavor to put all other nuts to shame. These delicious almonds compete with Candied Nuts (page 120) for my favorite Christmas snack. Please, guys, don't make me choose!

- 1 Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Spread almonds on top and toast for 8–10 minutes. Remove almonds from the oven, keeping the oven on, and allow almonds to cool for 5 minutes before handling.
- 2 In a large bowl, combine the toasted almonds, maple syrup, and cinnamon. Stir to combine; make sure each almond is coated well. Spread the coated almonds back onto the baking sheet and sprinkle with sea salt. Bake for 24–25 minutes, stirring every 8 minutes.
- 3 Remove almonds from the oven and allow to cool completely on the baking sheet before serving.



COCOA ROASTED ALMONDS

Prep time: 5 minutes
Total time: 45 minutes
Makes: 1 cup (143g)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (143g) unsalted almonds
- 1 tbsp pure maple syrup
- 2 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tbsp all-purpose flour

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- large baking sheet

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store nuts in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 month. For longer storage, freeze up to 2 months; thaw overnight in the refrigerator before serving.

My friend Kristen and I love cocoa almonds. We used to get our fix with a store-bought version, but that was before I taught myself how to make these slightly sweet almonds from scratch. They are so easy! If you're looking for a simple way to kick your almonds up a notch, add cocoa and roast 'em.

- 1 Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside.
- 2 Combine the almonds and maple syrup in a medium-size bowl. Stir with a rubber spatula to coat all of the almonds evenly. Stir in the cocoa powder and flour, making sure each almond is well coated with the mixture. Spread the coated almonds onto the baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes, tossing once at the 10-minute mark.
- 3 Remove almonds from the oven and allow to cool completely on the baking sheet before serving.





TOASTED COCONUT FRUIT 'N' NUT BALLS

Prep time: 20 minutes
Total time: 50 minutes
Makes: 14 balls

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (93g) shredded unsweetened coconut
- 2 tbsp natural unsweetened or Dutch-process cocoa powder
- ½ cup (72g) raw unsalted almonds
- ½ cup (65g) raw unsalted cashews
- 1 cup (145g) raisins
- ½ cup (60g) dried cranberries
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp honey

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- large baking sheet
- food processor or blender

In a cookbook full of candy and sweets, a recipe consisting of healthy dried fruit and nuts is definitely out of place. But I still pop these fruit 'n' nut balls like they're candy. They keep well in the refrigerator for whenever you need something sweet yet wholesome . . . which you'll likely crave after making the other recipes in this book.

- 1 Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Spread the coconut onto the prepared baking sheet and toast for 7–9 minutes, or until light brown in color. Remove from the oven and set aside.
- 2 Place all of the other ingredients into a food processor or blender, in the order listed, and pulse 15–20 times or until a thick, clumpy “dough” is formed. Make sure all of the large pieces of nuts are broken down. Once a dough has formed, measure 2 teaspoons and roll into a ball. Roll the ball into toasted coconut and place on a large plate, a lined baking sheet, or in an airtight container for storing. Repeat with rest of dough. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.



SALLY SAYS: These fruit 'n' nut balls are so easy to adapt to what ingredients you have on hand or what you like best. For a sweeter treat, use sweetened shredded coconut. You might try replacing both the almonds and cashews with 1 cup (146g) raw unsalted peanuts or 1 cup (146g) walnuts. Dried cherries are a tasty substitute for the raisins or dried cranberries. Maple syrup or agave can be used instead of honey. And for a salty-sweet treat, use salted nuts.

PEANUT CLUSTERS

Prep time: 15 minutes
Total time: 1 hour, 15 minutes
Makes: 40 clusters

INGREDIENTS

4½ cups (653g) roasted salted peanuts

12oz (340g) white, semi-sweet, or milk chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 large baking sheets

double boiler (optional)

This two-ingredient sweet-and-salty candy could not be easier to make—a blessing if you need something quick! Since there are only two ingredients, make sure you're using the right ones: quality chocolate and roasted salted peanuts.

- 1 Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside. Pour peanuts in a large heatproof bowl. Set aside.
- 2 Melt or temper the chocolate (see page 42). Pour over peanuts and stir to evenly coat. Drop by rounded spoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets. If chocolate is tempered, allow to set completely at room temperature, about an hour; if chocolate is not tempered, allow to set in the refrigerator, about 30 minutes.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Layer clusters between sheets of parchment or wax paper in an airtight container. If chocolate has not been tempered, store in the refrigerator for up to 10 days. If chocolate has been tempered, store in a cool, dry place for up to 4 weeks.





SWEET HEAT CARAMEL CORN

Prep time: 20 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Makes: 10 cups (354g)

INGREDIENTS

8 cups (64g) air-popped popcorn

2 cups (290g) salted peanuts

1 cup (220g) light brown sugar, packed

¼ cup (60ml) light corn syrup

½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter

½ tsp salt

½ tsp baking soda

¼ tsp cayenne pepper, plus more if desired

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2 large baking sheets

3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan

Here's a not-so-regular caramel corn that will leave everyone surprised. In a very good way! Adding a little cayenne pepper to caramel before pouring it over air-popped popcorn may just be the best decision I've ever made. It's salty, it's sweet, it's just the right kick of heat. What I love most about this caramel corn is that all these wonderful flavors unfold with each bite; first you taste sweet, then a little salt, and then the subtle spice shows up. This blend of flavors is what makes this stuff so completely irresistible. If regular caramel corn is more your style, simply leave out the cayenne and peanuts.

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°F (95°C). Toss the popcorn and peanuts in a very large bowl. Spread the mixture onto 2 large baking sheets lined with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
- 2 Combine the brown sugar, corn syrup, butter, and salt in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until butter has melted. Next, bring to a boil while stirring occasionally. Allow to boil for 5 minutes without stirring. Remove from the heat and quickly stir in the baking soda. The caramel will immediately foam and bubble. Give it a quick stir, then stir in the cayenne. If you like some extra spice, add up to ½ teaspoon. Pour the spiced caramel over the popcorn-peanut mixture and toss gently until all of the kernels are coated.
- 3 Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Allow to cool on the pans, then break apart large clusters if desired.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Once cooled, store in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks.



SALLY SAYS: What's the baking soda for? It helps give the caramel coating a softer texture. Read page 13 (Sally's Key Ingredients) for a brief chemistry lesson!

CINNAMON BUN CARAMEL CORN

Prep time: 20 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Makes: 7 cups (56g)

INGREDIENTS

- 7 cups (56g) air-popped popcorn
- 1 cup (220g) light brown sugar, packed
- ¼ cup (60ml) light corn syrup
- ½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1½ tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 6oz (170g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 2 large baking sheets
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan

Caramel corn for breakfast? Sure, why not. Once you taste the goodness inside this sweet cinnamon caramel corn you might just be tempted. This recipe came to me when I was brainstorming caramel corn recipes over brunch with some friends. Things seemed almost too perfect as I indulged in a caramel sticky bun drizzled with vanilla glaze. If cinnamon buns are your breakfast of choice, this recipe's for you.

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°F (95°C). Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Spread the popcorn evenly onto the baking sheets. Set aside.
- 2 Combine the brown sugar, corn syrup, butter, and salt in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until butter has melted. Next, bring to a boil while stirring occasionally. Allow to boil for 5 minutes without stirring. Remove from the heat and quickly stir in the baking soda. The caramel will immediately foam and bubble. Give it a quick stir, then stir in the vanilla and cinnamon. Pour the caramel over the popcorn and toss gently until all of the kernels are coated.
- 3 Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Allow to cool on the pans, then break apart large clusters if desired. Melt the white chocolate (see page 44), being careful not to overheat it. Once melted, immediately drizzle over the caramel corn and allow to cool.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Once cooled, store in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks.





"A human snack."

PRETZEL M&M'S® PUPPY CHOW

Prep time: 15 minutes

Total time: 15 minutes

Makes: about 11 cups (643g)

INGREDIENTS

- 8 cups (216g) Rice Chex™ cereal
- 1 cup (182g) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup (130g) creamy peanut butter
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1½ cups (180g) confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup (160g) Pretzel M&M's®
- 2 cups (85g) mini pretzel twists

Puppy chow is a sweet snack mix (for humans) often combining chocolate, peanut butter, Chex™ cereal, and confectioners' sugar. I'm a puppy chow freak and I urge you to make this version immediately. Between the peanut butter and chocolate, this is the perfect place to add crunchy pretzels and salty sweet Pretzel M&M's®.

- 1 Pour the cereal into a very large bowl. Set aside.
- 2 Melt the chocolate chips, peanut butter, and butter in a large saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly until smooth, about 5 minutes. Pour mixture over cereal and stir very gently to coat—gently so you do not break up the cereal.
- 3 Pour the confectioners' sugar into a large zipped-top bag. Add the cereal. Seal the bag and shake until all of the cereal is coated with sugar. Pour the coated cereal back into the large bowl. Stir in the M&M's® and pretzels. Discard any excess confectioners' sugar.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store the snack mix in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup (½ stick; 57g) unsalted butter
- 10oz (283g) bag marshmallows
- 6 cups (210g) Lucky Charms® cereal

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) baking pan

When eating Lucky Charms® cereal, do you save the marshmallows for the very last few bites? I'm pretty sure that's the proper way to eat this cereal. I haven't had this cereal for breakfast in years, but I'd be lying if I said I haven't eaten it for dessert recently. These cereal squares are double the gooey goodness, thanks to these colorful little marshmallows. If you're feeling up to it, use 10 ounces (283g) of my homemade Marshmallows (page 20).

- 1 Spray a 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
- 2 Melt the butter in a large saucepan over low heat. Once melted, add the marshmallows and stir constantly until just about fully melted. Some small chunks of marshmallow may remain. Remove from heat and add the Lucky Charms® cereal, stirring with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon until the cereal is fully coated.
- 3 Spoon cereal mixture into the prepared baking pan and gently spread out evenly. To help, lightly spray the back of a large spatula with nonstick cooking spray and, using the back of this spatula, gently press the cereal mixture into the pan without packing it down too much. Allow to sit for 2 hours at room temperature or for at least 1 hour in the refrigerator before cutting into squares.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store the bars in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week. To freeze, place bars in layers separated by parchment or wax paper in an airtight container. Freeze for up to 1 month; let stand at room temperature for 1 hour before serving.





OH-SO-FABULOUS FUDGE

In a cookbook full of candy recipes, it's hard to pinpoint the sweetest chapter of them all, but I think you've just reached it. This chapter begins with my more challenging—yet completely approachable—fudge recipes, which require a candy thermometer. The success of these recipes depends on two things: cooking the fudge to the proper temperature and knowing when to stop the beating process. A trusted candy thermometer is crucial. As for the beating, you have to get the fudge to the proper consistency. Beating fudge is one of the last steps; if your fudge does not set up after cooling, it has not been beaten long enough. As you work, keep this in mind: fudge should be nearly set when you're done beating it. It will have changed from a shiny liquid into a matte fudge with an extremely thick consistency. This process can take a very long time depending on the recipe and the size of the batch, which is why a mixer is highly recommended.

In a couple of recipes, you'll see that fudge can be made in an easier way using chocolate chips and sweetened condensed milk. These fudge recipes may not taste as authentic as the more old-fashioned ones, but they're still creamy, fudgy, and undoubtedly tasty.

BE PREPARED

Fudge is a perfect recipe to make ahead of time for gift-giving and holidays. Unless otherwise noted, these are the instructions for storing:

* Layer cooled fudge pieces between sheets of parchment or wax paper and store in an airtight container at room temperature in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week or in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.

* To freeze the fudge, individually wrap pieces of fudge or double wrap the entire batch of fudge in plastic wrap and store in an airtight container in the freezer for up to 2 months; thaw overnight in the refrigerator before serving.

CLASSIC CHOCOLATE FUDGE

Prep time: 45 minutes

Total time: 3 hours, 45 minutes

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

2½ tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature, divided

2 cups (400g) sugar

1 cup (240ml) heavy cream

¼ cup (60ml) light corn syrup

¼ tsp salt

6oz (170g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

1 tsp vanilla extract

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

8-in (20cm) square baking pan

3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan

pastry brush

candy thermometer

handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

This classic, from-scratch chocolate fudge is the definition of indulgence. A small square, tasting like a cross between dark chocolate brownies and rich chocolate buttercream, is plenty to keep your sweet tooth satisfied. My favorite part is the creaminess; each bite completely melts in your mouth. This is the kind of fudge your grandmother made for you when you were young, the kind you enjoy from candy shops, and the kind everyone won't stop talking about. Pure, simple, and anything but plain!

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Lightly grease the foil with ½ tablespoon butter. Set pan and remaining butter aside.
- 2 Combine the sugar, cream, corn syrup, and salt in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Using a wooden spoon, stir constantly as the sugar dissolves. Once dissolved, bring the mixture to a boil without stirring. Once boiling, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush.
- 3 Temporarily remove pan from the heat and stir in the chocolate until combined and smooth. Return to heat and attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 4 Without stirring, cook the mixture until the thermometer registers 234°F (112°C; soft ball stage), about 10–15 minutes. Turn off the stove and remove pan from the heat. Without mixing in, simply add the 2 remaining tablespoons (28g) of butter. Place the pan in shallow ice water to help the mixture quickly cool down to 110°F (43°C).
- 5 Once at 110°F (43°C), gently mix in the butter (which will have now melted on top by now) with a wooden spoon. Without scraping the sides of the pan (this causes graininess in the fudge), spoon the mixture into the bowl of your stand mixer or, if using a handheld mixer, into a large mixing bowl. Add the vanilla and beat on medium-high for 10 minutes, until the mixture thickens and loses its shine. Pour/spoon the fudge into the prepared 8-in (20cm) square baking pan and use a rubber spatula or wooden spoon to smooth it into an even layer.
- 6 Cover with aluminum foil and allow to set at room temperature for at least 3 hours. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, and turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1-in (2.5cm) squares.



SALLY SAYS: Sufficiently beaten fudge is matte and opaque. If you find that your fudge has gotten too thick and cannot be easily spread into the pan, beating in a spoonful of very hot water can help.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Be Prepared* (page 137).





ROCKY ROAD FUDGE

Prep time: 45 minutes

Total time: 3 hours, 45 minutes

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

- 2½ tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature, divided
- 2 cups (400g) sugar
- 1 cup (240ml) heavy cream
- ¼ cup (60ml) light corn syrup
- ¼ tsp salt
- 6oz (170g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup (145g) salted peanuts
- 1½ cups (75g) miniature marshmallows

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 8-in (20cm) square baking pan
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- pastry brush
- candy thermometer
- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

How do you turn a truly magnificent chocolate fudge into something even more divine? A few salty peanuts here, a lot of dreamy marshmallows there. This Rocky Road Fudge is for those of us who crave texture. And it delivers! Though the nuts and marshmallows add a whole new layer of awesome, the chocolate is still the star of the show.

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Lightly grease the foil with ½ tablespoon butter. Set pan and remaining butter aside.
- 2 Combine the sugar, cream, corn syrup, and salt in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Using a wooden spoon, stir constantly as the sugar dissolves. Once dissolved, bring the mixture to a boil without stirring. Once boiling, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush.
- 3 Temporarily remove pan from the heat and stir in the chocolate until combined and smooth. Return to heat and attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 4 Without stirring, cook the mixture until the thermometer registers 234°F (112°C; soft ball stage), about 10–15 minutes. Turn off the stove and remove pan from the heat. Without mixing in, simply add the 2 remaining tablespoons (28g) of butter. Place the pan in shallow ice water to help the mixture quickly cool down to 110°F (43°C).
- 5 Once at 110°F (43°C), gently mix in the butter (which will have now melted on top by now) with a wooden spoon. Without scraping the sides of the pan (this causes graininess in the fudge), spoon the mixture into the bowl of your stand mixer or, if using a handheld mixer, into a large mixing bowl. Add the vanilla and beat on medium-high for 10 minutes, until the mixture thickens and loses its shine.
- 6 By hand, fold in the peanuts and marshmallows until just combined. The mixture will be extremely thick. Spread the fudge into the prepared 8-in (20cm) square baking pan and use a rubber spatula or wooden spoon to smooth it into an even layer.
- 7 Cover with aluminum foil and allow to set at room temperature for at least 4 hours. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, and turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1-in (2.5cm) squares.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Be Prepared* (page 137).

PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE

Prep time: 25 minutes

Total time: 3 hours, 25 minutes or overnight

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

- 1¾ cups (350g) sugar
- ¾ cup (180ml) heavy cream
- ¾ cup (185g) creamy peanut butter
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2oz (57g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 8-in (20cm) square baking pan
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
- pastry brush
- candy thermometer

Moderation? Self-control? What is that nonsense?! All hail the old-fashioned, sweet, and simple peanut butter fudge, ruining one diet at a time. And because I'm completely ridiculous, I like to swirl chocolate into my peanut butter fudge.

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Set aside.
- 2 Combine sugar and cream in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Attach a candy thermometer to the side of the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom. Stirring lightly every 5 minutes with a wooden spoon, bring the mixture to a boil. Once boiling, stop stirring and allow the mixture to continue to boil until the thermometer registers 250°F (121°C; hard ball stage). Remove pan from the heat and stir in the peanut butter, salt, and vanilla.
- 3 Gently fold in the chocolate, creating swirls. Do not stir to completely combine; you want those pretty chocolate swirls. Pour mixture into the prepared baking pan. Do not scrape the sides of the saucepan. Smooth fudge into an even layer.
- 4 Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate for 3 hours, or until set. Alternatively, you can let the covered fudge set at room temperature overnight. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, and turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1-in (2.5cm) squares.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Be Prepared* (page 137).





FLUFFERNUTTER SWIRL FUDGE

Prep time: 25 minutes

Total time: 3 hours, 25 minutes or overnight

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

1¾ cups (350g) sugar

¾ cup (180ml) heavy cream

¾ cup (185g) creamy peanut butter

¼ tsp salt

1 tsp vanilla extract

2oz (57g) semi-sweet chocolate,
coarsely chopped

1 cup (50g) miniature marshmallows

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

8-in (20cm) square baking pan

3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan

pastry brush

candy thermometer

Do you know what a fluffernutter is? It's the whimsically named sandwich that combines creamy peanut butter and sweet marshmallow crème between two pieces of white bread. As healthy as a turkey on wheat? We can pretend. This fudge is inspired by the MANY memories I have of eating fluffernutters with my sister, Sarah. The fudge begins the same way as Peanut Butter Fudge (page 142). This one's for you, Sare!

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Set aside.
- 2 Combine sugar and cream in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Attach a candy thermometer to the side of the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom. Stirring lightly every 5 minutes with a wooden spoon, bring the mixture to a boil. Once boiling, stop stirring and allow the mixture to continue to boil until the thermometer registers 250°F (121°C; hard ball stage). Remove pan from the heat and stir in the peanut butter, salt, and vanilla.
- 3 Let the fudge rest for 10 minutes to slightly cool, then gently fold in the marshmallows. The marshmallows will begin to melt and create swirls as you stir. Do not stir to completely combine; you want those pretty swirls. Pour into the prepared pan and smooth into an even layer.
- 4 Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate for 3 hours, or until set. Alternatively, you can let the covered fudge set at room temperature overnight. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, and turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1-in (2.5cm) squares.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Be Prepared* (page 137).

MAPLE WALNUT FUDGE

Prep time: 45 minutes
Total time: 4 hours, 45 minutes
Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

2½ tbsp unsalted butter, softened to room temperature, divided
¾ cup (180ml) pure maple syrup
1½ cups (355ml) heavy cream
3 cups (600g) sugar
3 tbsp light corn syrup
¼ tsp salt
2 tsp vanilla extract
1½ cups (175g) chopped raw unsalted walnuts

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

8-in (20cm) square baking pan
3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan
pastry brush
candy thermometer
handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

Am I allowed to choose favorites? I'm a huge maple lover, so this fudge has always been my first-choice flavor. Rich and buttery, this from-scratch fudge takes the cake for comfort food. It reminds me of summer days walking on the boardwalk, passing by fudge kitchens, and grabbing two, five, ten free samples. The addition of walnuts gives the perfect contrast in texture to the smooth yet slightly crumbly fudge. Make sure you use pure maple syrup—not breakfast syrup, sugar-free, or imitation. Chopped pecans make a lovely substitute for the walnuts.

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Lightly grease the foil with ½ tablespoon butter. Set pan and remaining butter aside.
- 2 Combine maple syrup, heavy cream, sugar, corn syrup, and salt in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat. Using a wooden spoon, stir constantly as the sugar dissolves. Once dissolved, bring the mixture to a boil without stirring. Once boiling, brush down the sides of the pan with a water-moistened pastry brush. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan, making sure not to let it touch the bottom.
- 3 Without stirring, cook the mixture until the thermometer registers 238°F (114°C; soft ball stage). Remove pan from the heat. Without mixing in, simply add the remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Place the pan in shallow ice water to help the mixture quickly cool down to 110°F (43°C).
- 4 Once at 110°F (43°C), gently mix in the butter (which will have melted on top by now) with a wooden spoon. Without scraping the sides of the pan (this causes graininess in the fudge), spoon the mixture into the bowl of your stand mixer or, if using a handheld mixer, into a large mixing bowl. Add the vanilla and beat on medium-high for 10 minutes until the mixture thickens and loses its shine. Beat in the walnuts on low speed until combined, about 1 minute. Pour the fudge into the prepared baking pan and use a rubber spatula or wooden spoon to smooth it into an even layer.
- 5 Cover with aluminum foil and allow to start setting at room temperature for 1 hour before transferring to the refrigerator to fully set for another 4–5 hours. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, and turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1-in (2.5cm) squares.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: This fudge is best stored in the refrigerator. Layer cooled fudge pieces between sheets of parchment or wax paper and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. For freezing instructions, see *Be Prepared* (page 137).





SHORTCUT CHOCOLATE FUDGE

Prep time: 15 minutes

Total time: 6 hours, 15 minutes or overnight

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

14oz (396g) can full-fat
sweetened condensed milk

3 cups (546g) semi-sweet
chocolate chips

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 cup (117g) coarsely chopped
walnuts

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

8-in (20cm) square baking pan

Here's a "no-fail" fudge I discovered when I was just starting out making candy and the sight of a candy thermometer sent me running for the hills. The sweetened condensed milk gives it a smooth texture, which eliminates the need for the long period of beating required by more traditional fudge recipes. While certainly not your grandma's classic chocolate fudge, this is a recipe to keep on hand when you want something simple. Or, you know, if candy thermometers scare you. (They aren't scary, I promise!)

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Set aside.
- 2 Combine condensed milk and chocolate chips in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon as the chocolate chips melt. Once the mixture is smooth and the chocolate chips have melted, remove pan from the heat. The mixture will be extremely thick at this point. Stir in the vanilla extract and walnuts until combined. Pour the thick mixture into the prepared pan and smooth into an even layer.
- 3 Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate for 4 hours, or until set. Alternatively, you can let the covered fudge sit at room temperature overnight to set. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, and turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1-in (2.5cm) squares. (If the fudge has been in the refrigerator for longer than 4 hours, it might be quite stiff; if so, allow to sit at room temperature for 20 minutes before cutting.)

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: *Be Prepared* (page 137).

CREAMY CRANBERRY PISTACHIO FUDGE

Prep time: 15 minutes

Total time: 6 hours, 15 minutes or overnight

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

- 14oz (396g) can full-fat sweetened condensed milk
- 3 cups (546g) white chocolate chips
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup (120g) dried cranberries
- ¾ cup (92g) shelled salted pistachios

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 8-in (20cm) square baking pan

I recently became obsessed with a pistachio white chocolate cranberry cookie I posted on my blog. If you haven't noticed by now, I'm obsessed with a lot of things. But my love for those cookies is borderline crazy. I took the same exact flavors and made fudge with them this past holiday season. My husband's coworkers went nuts for it. The base of this creamy fudge recipe is my Shortcut Chocolate Fudge (page 148), only this time, I use white chocolate chips instead of semi-sweet chocolate.

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Set aside.
- 2 Combine condensed milk and white chocolate chips in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon as the chips melt. Once the mixture is smooth and the chips have melted, remove pan from the heat. The mixture will be extremely thick at this point. Stir in the vanilla extract, salt, cranberries, and pistachios until combined. Pour the thick mixture into the prepared pan and smooth into an even layer.
- 3 Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate for 4 hours, or until set. Alternatively, you can let the covered fudge sit at room temperature overnight to set. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, and turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1-in (2.5cm) squares. (If the fudge has been in the refrigerator for longer than 4 hours, it might be quite stiff; if so, allow to sit at room temperature for 20 minutes before cutting.)

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Be Prepared* (page 137).



SALLY SAYS: I use both a pinch of salt and salted pistachios in this fudge. White chocolate chips are quite sweet, so these additions of salt balance the flavor wonderfully.





BIRTHDAY CAKE FUDGE

Prep time: 15 minutes

Total time: 6 hours, 15 minutes or overnight

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares

CHOCOLATE FUDGE LAYER

1½ cups (273g) semi-sweet chocolate chips

½ x 14oz (198g) can full-fat sweetened condensed milk

2 tbsp marshmallow creme

WHITE FUDGE LAYER

1½ cups (273g) white chocolate chips

½ cup plus 1 tbsp (½ x 14oz can; 198g) full-fat sweetened condensed milk

2 tbsp marshmallow crème

1 tsp vanilla extract

⅓ cup (53g) plus 1 tbsp sprinkles, rainbow or any color, divided

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

8-in square (20cm) baking pan

What you see here is the fudge version of chocolate birthday cake with vanilla frosting. The creamy chocolate fudge layer is topped off with a vanilla white chocolate marshmallow fudge layer, or “frosting,” as I like to call it! I fold sprinkles into the top layer, which transforms the sweet dessert into a party. Make sure you use sprinkles (a.k.a. jimmies) and not nonpareils (the little ball sprinkles). Nonpareils can be used to decorate the top of the fudge, but do not mix them in the white layer, as their color will bleed.

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Set aside.
- 2 Make the Chocolate Fudge Layer: Combine the semi-sweet chocolate chips, sweetened condensed milk, and marshmallow crème in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon as the chocolate chips melt. Once the mixture is smooth and the chips have melted, remove pan from the heat. The mixture will be extremely thick. Pour into the prepared pan, smoothing down the top to make 1 even layer. Set aside. You can either wash, dry, and reuse the same saucepan for the next layer or use a new, similar-size saucepan.
- 3 Make the White Fudge Layer: Combine the white chocolate chips, sweetened condensed milk, and marshmallow crème in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon as the chips melt. Once the mixture is smooth and the chips have melted, remove pan from the heat. The mixture will be extremely thick. Stir in the vanilla extract and once fully combined, very gently fold in ⅓ cup (53g) of the sprinkles. Do not stir too much or the color from the sprinkles could bleed. Pour on top of the chocolate layer, smoothing down the top to make 1 even layer. Decorate with remaining 1 tbsp sprinkles while the fudge is still warm and wet.
- 4 Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate for 4 hours or until set. Alternatively, you can let the covered fudge sit at room temperature overnight to set. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, then turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1-in (2.5cm) squares. (If the fudge has been in the refrigerator for longer than 4 hours, it might be quite stiff; if so, allow to sit at room temperature for 20 minutes before cutting.)

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Be Prepared* (page 137).

TWIX® CARAMEL FUDGE

Prep time: 15 minutes

Total time: 6 hours, 15 minutes or overnight

Makes: 64 x 1-in (2.5cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (306g) full-fat sweetened condensed milk (slightly less than 1 x 14oz [396g] can)
- 2 tbsp Caramel for Dipping (page 92)
- 3 cups (546g) white chocolate chips
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 heaping cup chopped Twix® bars (about 12 fun-size or 3 regular [1½ packs])

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 8-in (20cm) square pan

How can you improve upon the milk chocolate–caramel phenomenon called Twix®? Caramel-kissed fudge is the answer. (This is always the answer.) You’ve never had fudge like this before! It’s creamy, full of caramel, loaded with milk chocolate swirls, and packed with crunchy Twix®. I like to call this Total Twix® Utopia. For a seriously chocolaty treat, swap out the white chocolate chips for milk chocolate chips.

- 1 Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Set aside.
- 2 Combine condensed milk, caramel, and white chocolate chips in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon as the chips melt. Once the mixture is smooth and the chips have melted, remove pan from the heat. The mixture will be extremely thick at this point. Stir in the vanilla extract and salt until combined. Allow to cool for 10 minutes. Once slightly cooled, gently fold in the Twix® bars. Do not completely combine; you want those pretty chocolate swirls from the melting candy bars.
- 3 Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate for 4 hours, or until set. Alternatively, you can let the covered fudge sit at room temperature overnight to set. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, then turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1-in (2.5cm) squares. (If the fudge has been in the refrigerator for longer than 4 hours, it might be quite stiff; if so, allow to sit at room temperature for 20 minutes before cutting.)

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: See *Be Prepared* (page 137).





COOKIES 'N' CREAM FUDGE

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 6 hours, 30 minutes

Makes: 36 x 1½-in (3.75cm) squares

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter, cubed
- 2 cups (400g) sugar
- 1 cup (240ml) heavy cream
- 2 cups (364g) white chocolate chips
- 1 x 7oz jar (198g) marshmallow crème
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 16 regular or Double Stuf Oreos®, crumbled into small pieces, divided

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9-in (23cm) square baking pan
- 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan

This fudge is bonkers. The fudge itself tastes like the cream filling of an Oreo®—we have the combination of melted white chocolate chips and marshmallow crème to thank for that. Inside of this creamy, sweet fudge are Oreo® cookies. Heaps of 'em. You haven't had an Oreo® cookie until you've had it like this. Seriously.

- 1 Line a 9-in (23cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the fudge once it has set. Set aside.
- 2 Combine the butter, sugar, and heavy cream in a 3-qt (2.8L) heavy-duty saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir occasionally (about every 2 minutes) with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon and bring to a boil. Once boiling, begin to stir constantly and allow to boil for 4 minutes. Remove pan from the heat.
- 3 Stir in the white chocolate chips and marshmallow crème until smooth, then stir in the vanilla extract and fold in three-quarters of the Oreo® crumbles. The fudge will be very thick. Spoon into the prepared pan, doing your best to spread into an even layer. Sprinkle with remaining Oreo® crumbles and press them into the top of the fudge using the back of a large spatula so they adhere.
- 4 Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate for at least 6 hours, or until set. Once set, remove the fudge from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil. Invert the fudge onto a cutting board, peel away foil, then turn the fudge back over. Using a large sharp knife, slice the fudge into 1½-in (3.75cm) squares.

 **SALLY SAYS:** You can use any flavor Oreo® cookie in this recipe!

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: This fudge is best stored in the refrigerator. Layer cooled fudge pieces between sheets of parchment or wax paper and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. For freezing instructions, see *Be Prepared* (page 137).



JUST ADD CANDY

Though candy making is a big part of my life, baking IS my life. That's why I began my blog in the first place. To me, there is nothing compared to pulling freshly baked cookies from the oven or serving a homemade cake at a birthday party. I love every second of it and that's how this chapter came to be.

Your oven has, for the most part, been off the hook so far, but you're about to put it to work over the next several pages. In this chapter, you'll find everything from cheesecake and vanilla cake to cupcakes, cookies, and brownies. The fan favorites from the baking world are all here, and they're filled to the brim with candies such as Snickers[®], Rolo[®], Milky Way[®], and Heath[®].

Here's a tip you'll find helpful over the next several pages: Just as in candy making, temperature is everything in baking. A few recipes in this chapter say to use room-temperature eggs when using room-temperature or melted butter. This is because ingredients near the same temperature combine more evenly, creating a uniform texture throughout your baked goods. Similarly, other cold ingredients should be brought to room temperature, such as sour cream and milk. Simply place these ingredients out on the counter 1 hour prior to starting the recipe. Trust me, doing this will make all the difference in your finished dessert!

Also in this chapter are a plethora of no-bake desserts, such as homemade ice cream, cream pie, and scotcheroos. All including . . . you guessed it . . . candy!



YORK[®] PEPPERMINT PATTIE CUPCAKES

Prep time: 25 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 45 minutes (includes cooling)

Makes: 12 cupcakes

CUPCAKES

- ½ cup (43g) unsweetened natural cocoa powder
- ¾ cup (95g) all-purpose flour
- ¾ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- ½ cup (100g) sugar
- ½ cup (110g) light brown sugar, packed
- ⅓ cup (80ml) vegetable oil
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ cup (120ml) buttermilk

PEPPERMINT VANILLA FROSTING

- 1 cup (2 sticks; 227g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 4½ cups (540g) confectioners' sugar, plus ½ cup (60g) if needed
- ¼ cup (60ml) heavy cream, plus 1 tbsp if needed
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp peppermint extract, plus more if needed
- ⅛ tsp salt, plus pinch if needed
- 6 snack size York[®] Peppermint Patties, sliced in half

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 12-count muffin pan
- 12 cupcake liners
- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle or whisk attachment
- pipng bag and Wilton[®] 1M tip (both optional; using a knife to frost is okay)

I went through a serious York[®] Peppermint Pattie obsession in high school, when you could find dozens of crumpled-up wrappers inside my locker. My love for the candy bar hasn't subsided since. That's why I make these rich chocolate cupcakes with a peppermint frosting. And, of course, that familiar candy topper. Be careful with the peppermint extract in the frosting—a little goes a long way!

- 1 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Line a 12-cup muffin pan with cupcake liners. Set aside.
- 2 Make the cupcakes: Whisk the cocoa powder, flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in a large bowl until combined. Set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs, sugar, brown sugar, oil, and vanilla together until completely smooth. Pour half of the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients. Then add half of the buttermilk. Gently whisk—about 5 stirs. Repeat with the remaining wet ingredients and buttermilk. Whisk until just combined; do not overmix. The batter will be a little thin.
- 3 Pour or spoon batter into cupcake liners, filling halfway. Bake for 18–21 minutes, or until the tops of the cupcakes spring back when gently touched and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Do not overbake; your cupcakes will quickly dry out. Allow to cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.
- 4 Make the frosting: With a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle or whisk attachment, beat the butter on medium speed in a large bowl until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add 4½ cups (540g) confectioners' sugar, ¼ cup (60ml) cream, vanilla and peppermint extracts, and salt with the mixer running on low. Increase the mixer to high speed and beat for 3 full minutes. Add ½ cup (60g) confectioners' sugar if the frosting is too thin or add 1 tablespoon of cream if frosting is too thick. Taste the frosting; add an extra drop of peppermint extract for more peppermint flavor if desired and/or an extra pinch of salt if frosting is too sweet. Frost cooled cupcakes and stick a Peppermint Pattie half on each. Leftover prepared cupcakes can be stored covered tightly at room temperature for up to 3 days.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: If you wish to prepare a day in advance, keep cupcakes covered tightly at room temperature and refrigerate frosting in an airtight container. Bring frosting to room temperature before spreading on cupcakes. Unfrosted cupcakes can be frozen up to 2 months; thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature before frosting and serving.

THE GREAT MILKY WAY® CAKE

Prep time: 1 hour
Total time: 4 hours, 30 minutes
Makes: 10 servings

CAKE

- 2 cups (230g) cake flour
- 1¾ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 3 large eggs, room temperature and separated
- ½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 1½ cups (300g) sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¾ cup (160ml) whole milk, room temperature

EASY CARAMEL SAUCE

- 1 cup (220g) light brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup (120ml) heavy cream
- 4 tbsp (½ stick; 57g) unsalted butter, quartered
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

FROSTING

- 1¼ cups (2½ sticks; 284g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 3½ cups (420g) confectioners' sugar, plus 2 tbsp if needed

- ¾ cup (65g) natural unsweetened or Dutch-process cocoa powder
- ¼ tsp salt, plus pinch if needed
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup (60ml) heavy cream, plus 1 tbsp if needed
- 1 cup (160g) chopped Milky Way® bars, divided (about 10 fun-size bars)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 2 x 9-in (23cm) cake pans
- flour sifter
- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle and whisk attachment

I've made a ton of cakes from scratch, but nothing compares to the greatness of this candy bar-filled beauty. It's a cross between vanilla cake and buttery moist yellow cake. Cake flour produces a blissfully soft cake, as you'll notice with the first bite. The cake itself is to die for, but the milk chocolate frosting, layer of Milky Ways®, and caramel drizzle completely transform it into something extraordinary. The layers can rise up quite tall, so make sure you level them off as needed (see page 164 for instructions).



SALLY SAYS: The reason for separating the eggs is to create an ultra-fluffy cake crumb. Egg yolks are mixed in with the wet ingredients, and voluminous whipped egg whites are folded into the batter before it goes into the oven. Whip the egg whites only until soft peaks form—right when the peaks are just starting to hold.

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray two 9-in (23cm) cake pans with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
- 2 Make the cake: Sift the cake flour, baking powder, and salt together in a large bowl. Set aside.
- 3 With a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, beat the egg whites on high speed in a medium bowl until soft peaks form, about 2–3 minutes. Set aside.
- 4 With a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on high speed in a large bowl until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Add the sugar and beat on high speed for 3–4 minutes until creamed. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Add the egg yolks and vanilla extract. Beat on medium-high speed until

continued on page 164



combined. Scrape the bowl again as needed. With the mixer on low speed, add the dry ingredients in 3 additions, alternating with the milk and mixing each addition just until incorporated. Do not overmix. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold in the egg whites until combined. The batter will be slightly thick.

- 5 Pour or spoon the batter evenly into prepared cake pans. Bake for 25–28 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of one cake comes out clean. During bake time, loosely cover the cakes with aluminum foil if you find the tops are browning too quickly. Remove cakes from the oven and allow to cool completely in the pans set on a wire rack.
- 6 Make the caramel sauce: As the cakes cool, combine the brown sugar, heavy cream, butter, and salt in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until butter is melted, about 2–3 minutes. Bring to a boil and, without stirring, allow to boil for 3 minutes. Remove saucepan from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract. Allow to cool for 15 minutes, then pour into a glass jar and cover tightly. Allow to cool at room temperature, about 45 minutes, or in the refrigerator, about 30 minutes, before using on the cake.
- 7 Make the frosting: After the cakes and caramel have cooled, using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle or whisk attachment, beat the butter on medium speed in a large bowl until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add 3½ cups (420g) confectioners’ sugar, cocoa powder, salt, vanilla, and ¼ cup (60ml) cream with the mixer running on low. Once added, increase the mixer to high speed and beat for 3 full minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of confectioners’ sugar if the frosting is too thin or add 1 tablespoon of cream if the frosting is too thick. Taste the frosting; add an extra pinch of salt if frosting is too sweet. Measure 1 cup (328g) of frosting and place it in a separate bowl. Fold in ½ cup (80g) of the chopped candy bars into the 1 cup (328g) of frosting. Set aside.
- 8 Frost and assemble the cake: Level the cake layers to create a flat surface (see “How to Level a Cake,” left). Place 1 cake layer on a cake stand or large serving plate. Evenly spread the frosting–candy bar mixture on top. Be gentle, as the cake is fragile and the frosting is thick and chunky. Top with second cake and spread the plain frosting all over the top and sides. Decorate the top with remaining chopped candy bars. Serve with caramel sauce drizzled on top. Cover any leftover cake tightly and store at room temperature for up to 3 days or in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

..... HOW TO LEVEL A CAKE

- ❖ Place a layer on a large cutting board. Using a serrated knife, carefully move the knife back and forth across the top of the cake in a sawing motion to remove the crown. Try to keep the knife level as you do this. Repeat with the second layer.
- ❖ Another option is to use a cake leveler.
- ❖ Instead of discarding the crowns, crumble them over ice cream.
- ❖ Alternatively, you can crumble them up and use them to decorate the sides of the frosted cake.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: To prepare a day in advance, keep cakes covered tightly at room temperature and refrigerate prepared frosting in an airtight container. Bring frosting to room temperature before spreading on the cake. Frosted cake can be frozen up to 2 months; when ready to serve, thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature before serving. Unfrosted cake layers can also be frozen up to 2 months; thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature before frosting, assembling, and serving. As everything is coming to room temperature, make the caramel sauce in step 6.





TOFFEE LOVER'S CUPCAKES

Prep time: 50 minutes

Total time: 2 hours, 10 minutes

Makes: 18 cupcakes

CUPCAKES

Cake batter for The Great Milky Way® Cake (page 162)

CHOCOLATE TOPPING

½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter

1 cup plus 2 tbsp (204g) milk chocolate chips

1½ cups (215g) chopped Heath® bars

MILK CHOCOLATE FROSTING

1 cup (2 sticks; 227g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

3½ cups (420g) confectioners' sugar, plus 2 tbsp if needed

½ cup (43g) unsweetened cocoa powder

½ tsp salt, plus pinch if needed

2 tsp vanilla extract

3 tbsp heavy cream or milk, plus 1 tbsp if needed

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

12-count muffin pan

12 cupcake liners

flour sifter

handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

pipng bag and Wilton® 1M tip (both optional; using a knife to frost is okay)

The only thing better than a cupcake with chocolate frosting is a cupcake with two chocolate frostings and plenty of chopped Heath® bars. Just sayin'.

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line a 12-count muffin pan with cupcake liners. This recipe makes 18 cupcakes, so you will have 6 cupcakes to bake in a second batch.
- 2 Make the cupcakes: Prepare the batter by following steps 2, 3, and 4 on pages 162–164.
- 3 Spoon batter into cupcake liners, filling halfway. Bake for 22–24 minutes, or until the tops of the cupcakes spring back when gently touched and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow to cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.
- 4 Make the chocolate topping: Melt the butter and chocolate chips in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes. Once melted and smooth, remove pan from the heat. Allow to cool and slightly thicken for 5 minutes, then pour into a wide, shallow bowl. Pour the chopped Heath® bars into a separate wide, shallow bowl. Dip the top of each cooled cupcake into the chocolate mixture, then roll the top edges in the Heath® bars. Set cupcakes aside for 20 minutes to allow the chocolate topping to set.
- 5 Make the frosting: With a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle or whisk attachment, beat the butter on medium speed in a large bowl until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add 3½ cups confectioners' sugar, cocoa powder, salt, vanilla, and 3 tbsp cream with the mixer running on low. Increase to high speed and beat for 3 full minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of confectioners' sugar if the frosting is too thin or add 1 tablespoon of cream if the frosting is too thick. Taste the frosting; add an extra pinch of salt if it is too sweet. Pipe or spread the frosting over the chocolate topping. Leftover prepared cupcakes can be stored covered tightly at room temperature for up to 3 days.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: If you wish to prepare a day in advance, keep cupcakes covered tightly at room temperature and refrigerate frosting in an airtight container. Bring frosting to room temperature before spreading on cupcakes. Unfrosted cupcakes can be frozen up to 2 months; thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature before frosting and serving.

SNICKERS® CHEESECAKE

Prep time: 20 minutes

Total time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Makes: 12 servings and 1 cup (240ml) caramel sauce

CRUST

20 Oreo® cookies (regular, Double Stuf, or any creme-filled chocolate cookie)

¼ cup (½ stick; 57g) unsalted butter, melted

FILLING

24oz (680g) full-fat cream cheese, softened to room temperature

1 cup (200g) sugar

1 cup (230g) full-fat sour cream (or yogurt), room temperature

2 tsp vanilla extract

3 large eggs, room temperature

16 fun-size or 4 regular-size Snickers®, chopped, plus more for garnish if desired

EASY CARAMEL SAUCE

1 cup (220g) light brown sugar, packed

½ cup (120ml) heavy cream

4 tbsp (½ stick; 57g) unsalted butter, quartered

¼ tsp salt

1 tsp vanilla extract

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

food processor or blender

9-in (23cm) springform pan


large roasting pan

handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

If there is one cheesecake you make in your lifetime, let this indulgent masterpiece be it. Yes, masterpiece. From the thick Oreo® cookie crust to the creamy cheesecake filling to the abundance of Snickers® chunks and the rich homemade caramel sauce on top, this outrageous cake is one ridiculously awesome way to inhale calories. And fast. My husband, who “doesn’t like cheesecake,” tells me this is one of the best desserts I’ve ever made. Surely I don’t need to convince you any more, right?

- 1 Adjust the oven rack to the lower third position and preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
- 2 Make the crust: In a food processor or blender, pulse the whole Oreos® into a fine crumb. Pour the cookie crumbs into a medium-size bowl and stir in melted butter until combined.
- 3 Press the mixture evenly into the bottom of a 9-in (23cm) springform pan and only slightly up the sides. Use the bottom of a small glass or measuring cup to firmly press it down. In preparation for the water bath—which will help prevent cracks on top of the cheesecake—in step 5, wrap aluminum foil under the bottom and tightly around the outside walls of the springform pan now. Bake the crust for 8–10 minutes as you prepare the filling (see step 4). When you remove the crust from the oven, keep the oven at 350°F (180°C).
- 4 Make the filling: Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese and sugar together on medium speed in a large bowl, about 3 full minutes, until smooth and creamy. Add the sour cream and vanilla and beat until combined. On low speed, add the eggs one at a time, beating after each addition until just blended. Do not overmix the filling after you have added the eggs. Using a rubber spatula, fold in the Snickers®.
- 5 Pour the filling into the pre-baked crust. For the water bath, place the springform pan into a large roasting pan and place into the oven. Fill with about 1 inch (2.5cm) of hot water. The foil wrapped around the springform pan will prevent water from leaking into the cheesecake.
- 6 Bake for 50–60 minutes, or until the center is almost set. Turn the oven off and open the door slightly. Let the cheesecake sit in the oven for 1 hour—like the water bath, this will help prevent cracks in the cheesecake. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely at room temperature. Once cooled, refrigerate for at least 6 hours or, preferably, overnight.
- 7 Make the caramel sauce: While the cheesecake is cooling, combine the brown sugar, heavy cream, butter, and salt in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until butter is melted, about 2–3 minutes. Bring to a boil and, without stirring, allow to boil for 3 minutes. Remove saucepan from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract. Allow to cool for 15 minutes, then pour into a glass jar and cover tightly. Allow to cool at room temperature, about 45 minutes, or in the refrigerator, about 30 minutes, before using on the cheesecake.

- 8 Prepare the cake for serving: Loosen the cheesecake from the rim of the pan and remove the rim. Cut into slices and serve chilled. Drizzle caramel sauce over slices. Serve with additional chopped Snickers®, if desired. Cover any leftover cheesecake tightly and store in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. Cover any leftover caramel sauce tightly and store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

 **SALLY SAYS:** Avoid overbaking the cheesecake. When it is done, there will still be a 2–3-in (5–7.5 cm) wobbly spot in the center; the texture will smooth out as it cools.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Cheesecake is a great make-ahead recipe because it needs to chill for a long period of time, even overnight. In step 6, instead of refrigerating for 6 hours or overnight, you can refrigerate for up to 3 days or, for longer storage, freeze it for up to 2 months. Before serving, thaw overnight in the refrigerator (if frozen), prepare caramel sauce, and continue with step 8.





PEANUT BUTTER BLOSSOMS

Prep time: 1 hour, 55 minutes

Total time: 2 hours, 5 minutes

Makes: 24 cookies

INGREDIENTS

½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

½ cup (110g) light brown sugar, packed

¾ cup (150g) sugar, divided

1 large egg, room temperature

¾ cup (194g) creamy peanut butter

1 tsp vanilla extract

1¼ cups (156g) all-purpose flour

½ tsp baking soda

¼ tsp salt

24 Hershey's Kisses®, unwrapped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

2 large baking sheets

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Soft cookies are the best make-ahead recipes because they stay soft. Store at room temperature in an airtight container for 7–10 days. For longer storage, freeze baked cookies for up to 3 months; allow to thaw in the refrigerator overnight before serving. Freeze unbaked cookie dough balls for up to 3 months, and bake for an extra minute or two in the oven. Do not thaw.

My ideal peanut butter cookie is (1) full of peanut butter flavor; (2) thick and chewy; and (3) not dry—peanut butter tends to dry out baked goods. This recipe covers those three things, and more! I typically bake these cookies plain, but pressing a Hershey's Kiss® in the center transforms them into something even better. Peanut Butter Blossoms are a classic American cookie that both kids and adults love. Though they are typically a favorite around the holidays, I enjoy these ultrasoft, peanut butter-packed, chocolate-adorned, so-good-my-head-spins cookies year-round.

- 1 Using a handheld mixer or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter in a large bowl for 1 minute on medium speed until completely smooth and creamy. Add the brown sugar and ¼ cup (50g) sugar and beat on medium-high speed until fluffy and light in color. Beat in the egg, peanut butter, and vanilla on high speed until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed.
- 2 In a separate medium-size bowl, whisk the flour, baking soda, and salt together until combined. On low speed, slowly mix into the wet ingredients until combined. Cover dough tightly with aluminum foil or plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 day. Chilling for the short period of time prevents the cookies from spreading in the oven.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C) and line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside. (Make sure you have room for these in your freezer because they will later need to be placed inside to prevent the Hershey's Kisses® from rapidly melting all over the warm cookies.)
- 4 Pour remaining ½ cup (100g) of sugar into a small bowl. Set aside.
- 5 Once cookie dough is chilled, remove from the refrigerator. Scoop and roll balls of dough, about 1 tablespoon each. Roll each ball in the sugar and place on the baking sheets, about 2 inches (5cm) apart. Bake for 9 minutes, until the tops begin to slightly crack. To get a super soft cookie, do not bake longer than this. For firmer cookies, bake up to 10–11 minutes. After 9 minutes, cookies will look like they're not done, but they will firm up as they cool. Allow cookies to cool for 10 minutes on the baking sheets.
- 6 Gently yet a little firmly, press a Hershey's Kiss® into each cookie on 1 of the baking sheets until the sides begin to slightly crack. Quickly stick the baking sheet in the freezer so the chocolate does not melt. Repeat with second baking sheet of cookies. Keep in the freezer for about 15 minutes.

COOKIES 'N' CREAM SWIRL COOKIES

Prep time: 3 hours, 50 minutes
Total time: 4 hours, 20 minutes
Makes: 32 cookies

CHOCOLATE COOKIE DOUGH

- ½ cup unsalted butter (1 stick; 114g), softened to room temperature
- ½ cup (110g) light or dark brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup (100g) sugar
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup (125g) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup plus 2 tbsp (54g) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1 cup chopped Hershey's® Cookies 'n' Creme bar

VANILLA COOKIE DOUGH

- ¾ cup (1½ sticks; 170g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- ¾ cup (165g) light or dark brown sugar, packed
- ¼ (50g) cup sugar
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cups (250g) all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup (86g) crumbled Oreos® cookies (about 12 cookies)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment
- 2 large baking sheets

One is often faced with the ultimate decision—vanilla or chocolate? I skip the nonsense and combine the best of both worlds: a chocolate cookie filled with pieces of Hershey's® Cookies 'n' Creme bar and a vanilla cookie filled with crumbled Oreos®. Four desserts in one!

- 1 Make the chocolate cookie dough: Using a handheld mixer or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter in a large bowl for 1 minute on medium speed until completely smooth and creamy. Add the brown sugar and sugar and beat on medium-high speed until fluffy and light in color. Beat in the egg and vanilla on high speed until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed.
- 2 Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt together in a separate medium-size bowl until combined. Pour the flour mixture into the wet ingredients and beat on medium speed until combined. Scrape down the side and bottom of the bowl as needed. On medium speed, beat in the milk and candy bar pieces until combined. If using a stand mixer, transfer the cookie dough to a medium bowl—since you will need to use the mixer again in step 3—and set aside. (If using a handheld mixer, simply set aside the cookie dough.)
- 3 Make the vanilla cookie dough: Using a handheld mixer or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter in a large bowl for 1 minute on medium speed until completely smooth and creamy. Add the brown sugar and sugar and beat on medium-high speed until fluffy and light in color. Beat in the egg and vanilla on high speed until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed.
- 4 Whisk the flour, cornstarch, baking soda, and salt together in a separate medium-size bowl until combined. Pour the flour mixture into the wet ingredients and beat on medium speed until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. Using a wooden spoon or rubber spatula, manually fold in the crumbled Oreos®.
- 5 Cover both cookie doughs with aluminum foil or plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 3 hours or up to 3 days. Chilling is mandatory; the cookies will spread all over the place if the cookie doughs are not chilled.
- 6 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C) and line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
- 7 Measure 1½ tablespoons of chocolate cookie dough and roll into a ball. Measure 1½ tablespoons of vanilla cookie dough and roll into a ball. Press the 2 balls together between your hands and roll them into 1 large ball, keeping one half chocolate and the other half vanilla. Repeat for each cookie. The chocolate cookie dough is a little sticky, so wash/wipe your hands after you roll each cookie. Place dough balls 3 inches (7.5cm) apart on the baking sheets. Bake the cookies in batches for 10–11 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.





WHOPPERS® CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Prep time: 20 minutes

Total time: 2 hours, 55 minutes

Makes: 16 large cookies

INGREDIENTS

- 2¼ cups (280g) all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1½ tsp cornstarch
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ cup (1½ sticks; 170g) unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled
- ¾ cup (165g) light brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup (100g) sugar
- 1 large egg plus 1 egg yolk (both at room temperature)
- 2 tsp (10ml) vanilla extract
- ½ cup (91g) milk chocolate chips, plus 2 tbsp (optional)
- 1 cup (115g) Whoppers®, each candy halved

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment
- 2 large baking sheets

Whoppers® are those little malted milk balls often sold at movie theater concession stands. But I don't go to the movies to enjoy these crunchy chocolate-coated candies. Rather, I enjoy them baked into my favorite chewy chocolate chip cookie recipe, which is one of the most popular recipes on my blog. The addition of chopped malted milk balls gives the cookies added texture and an unbeatable flavor. There aren't enough exclamation points to show how much I love these cookies!!!! You get the point.

- 1 Whisk the flour, baking soda, cornstarch, and salt together in a large bowl. Set aside.
- 2 In a medium bowl, whisk the melted butter, brown sugar, and sugar together until no brown sugar lumps remain. Whisk in the egg, then the egg yolk, followed by the vanilla. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and mix together with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula. Fold in ½ cup (91g) chocolate chips and all of the Whoppers®. Cover the cookie dough tightly and refrigerate for at least 2 hours (or up to 3 days). Chilling is mandatory.
- 3 Remove cookie dough from the refrigerator and allow to slightly soften at room temperature for 10 minutes. If you chilled the cookie dough for longer than 2 hours, let it sit at room temperature for a few minutes longer until it is workable.
- 4 Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C) and line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
- 5 Roll the cookie dough into balls, about 3 tablespoons of dough per cookie. If the dough is crumbly, the warmth of your hands will help it come together in a ball. Place 8 balls of dough 3 inches (7.5cm) apart onto each baking sheet.
- 6 Bake each batch for 11–12 minutes. The cookies will look very soft. Remove from the oven and allow to cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes. During this time, take 2 tablespoons of chocolate chips and gently press a couple chocolate chips into the top of each of the warm cookies, if desired. I do this purely for looks, so it's optional! After 10 minutes, transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely.



SALLY SAYS: Be careful chopping those Whoppers®. They are tiny and slippery little guys. Use a small paring knife and make slow cuts, simply chopping them in half.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Soft cookies are the best make-ahead recipes because they stay soft. Store at room temperature in an airtight container for 7–10 days. For longer storage, freeze baked cookies for up to 3 months; allow to thaw in the refrigerator overnight before serving. Freeze unbaked cookie dough balls for up to 3 months, and bake for an extra minute or two in the oven. Do not thaw.

BROWN BUTTER CARAMEL ROLO® BLONDIES

Prep time: 20 minutes

Total time: 2 hours, 20 minutes

Makes: 16 blondies

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter, cut into 8 equal slices
- 1 cup (220g) light brown sugar, packed
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 2 tsp (10ml) vanilla extract
- 1 cup (125g) all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 35 Rolos®, halved

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 8–10in (20–25cm) light-colored saucepan or skillet
- 8-in (20cm) square baking pan

Brown butter is a magical ingredient in baked goods because it adds a deep caramel-toffee flavor—something that fits wonderfully in this brown sugar blondie recipe. An obvious match for these blondies is a plethora of chewy Rolo® candies. Chop them up and add them to the batter before baking. The Rolos® will melt, creating pockets of milk chocolate and caramel in each bite. Did you read that? Pockets of milk chocolate and caramel!

- 1 First, you'll need to brown the butter. Melt over medium heat in a large saucepan or skillet. Use a light-colored pan so that you can see the color of the butter and know when it is browned. With a wooden spoon or rubber spatula, stir occasionally to ensure the butter is browning evenly. Once completely melted, the butter will begin to foam up and take on a nutty aroma. When it begins to turn tan, immediately remove the pan from the heat and pour into a medium-size heatproof bowl (this helps stop the cooking process). Allow the butter to cool for 10 minutes.
- 2 Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line an 8-in (20cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil or parchment paper, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the blondies once they have cooled.
- 3 In a large bowl, vigorously whisk the brown butter and brown sugar together until combined and no brown sugar lumps remain. Whisk in the egg and vanilla until combined. Set aside.
- 4 In a medium-size bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt together until combined. Slowly pour the flour mixture into the wet ingredients, stirring with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon until combined. Do not overmix. The batter will be very thick. Fold in the Rolos®.
- 5 Pour or spoon the batter into the prepared baking pan. Bake for 25 minutes, or until lightly browned on top. Allow the blondies to cool completely in the pan set on a wire rack. Once cool, remove the blondies from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil, invert onto a large cutting board, peel away foil, turn back over, and cut into squares.



SALLY SAYS: Avoid burning that brown butter! It's only a few seconds between flavorful brown butter and bitter burnt butter, so watch the pan carefully. If the butter is dark brown, it is burnt. Depending on your pan, browning butter can take anywhere from 5–8 minutes. For me? It's usually around the 6-minute mark.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Blondies can be stored for up to 1 week at room temperature in an airtight container. For longer storage, freeze blondies for up to 2 months and thaw overnight in the refrigerator before serving.





CRAZY CANDY DEEP-DISH COOKIE CAKE

Prep time: 45 minutes
Total time: 4 hours, 30 minutes
Makes: 8–10 servings

COOKIE CAKE

- 2¼ cups (281g) all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cornstarch
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks; 227g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup (220g) light brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup (100g) sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1¼ cups (219g) semi-sweet chocolate chunks or chips

CHOCOLATE TOPPING

- 5 tbsp (71g) unsalted butter
- 1 cup (182g) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- ¾ cup assorted candies, such as gummy bears (46g), M&M's® (52g), and mini peanut butter cups (43g)
- 3oz (85g) white chocolate, coarsely chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9 x 2-in (23 x 5cm) deep-dish cake pan or a 9-in (23cm) springform pan
- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

What you see here is a super-thick chocolate chip cookie masquerading as a cake. It's deep-dish style, chewy, and ridiculously rich. Two chopped Hershey's® milk chocolate bars take the place of chocolate chips. Since there is no stopping my sweet tooth, I have topped the cookie cake with fudgy chocolate, a drizzle of white chocolate, and a healthy dose of childhood favorites, such as M&M's®, peanut butter cups, and gummy bears.

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray a 9 x 2-in (23 x 5cm) deep-dish cake pan with nonstick spray. Set aside.
- 2 Make the cookie cake: Whisk the flour, baking soda, cornstarch, and salt together in a large bowl. Set aside.
- 3 Using a handheld mixer or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter for 1 minute on medium speed in a large bowl until completely smooth and creamy. Add the brown sugar and sugar and beat on medium-high speed until fluffy and light in color. Beat in the eggs and vanilla on high speed until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. Pour the flour mixture into the wet ingredients and beat on medium speed until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. On low speed, beat in the chocolate chunks or chips.
- 4 Press the cookie dough evenly into the prepared pan. Bake for 25–30 minutes, or until the cake is a light golden brown. If you find the edges are browning too quickly, cover the cookie cake loosely with aluminum foil. Remove from the oven and set the pan on a wire rack to cool completely, at least 3 hours. Once cooled, use a sharp knife or metal spatula to loosen the sides of the cookie cake from the pan. Gently remove and transfer to a serving plate or platter (it is easier to slice the cookie cake on a plate than in the pan).
- 5 Make the chocolate topping: Melt the butter and chocolate chips in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes. Once melted and smooth, remove pan from the heat. Gently spread it on top of the cookie cake with a large offset spatula or knife. Immediately sprinkle the top with assorted candies.
- 6 Melt the white chocolate (see page 42). Remove from heat and drizzle over the top of cake with a squeeze bottle (or fork).
- 7 Refrigerate for 1 hour (and up to 4 hours) to set the chocolate. Once set, remove from the refrigerator and slice to serve. Cover leftovers tightly and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: If you want to get a head start, prepare only the cookie cake 1 day in advance and keep covered tightly at room temperature; then the next day, continue with step 5. The cookie cake itself can be frozen up to 2 months; thaw overnight in the refrigerator, then bring to room temperature, and continue with step 5.

ULTIMATE PEANUT BUTTER BROWNIES

Prep time: 1 hour
Total time: 6 hours
Makes: 24 brownies

BROWNIES

- 1 cup (2 sticks; 227g) unsalted butter
- 8oz (227g) semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1½ cups (300g) sugar
- ½ cup (110g) light brown sugar, packed
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup plus 2 tbsp (79g) all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup (22g) unsweetened cocoa powder

PEANUT BUTTER FILLING

- 6 tbsp (¾ stick; 85g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup (260g) creamy peanut butter
- 2 cups (240g) confectioners' sugar
- 2 tbsp whole milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

CHOCOLATE TOPPING

- ½ cup (1 stick; 114g) unsalted butter
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp (204g) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- ¾ cup (135g) chopped Reese's Pieces®

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) baking pan
- handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment

Once upon a time, I made a simple from-scratch brownie. Before I knew it, I began layering a peanut butter cup filling of sorts on top. And I must have been out of my mind that day because I went ahead and topped it with melted chocolate. And nothing is complete without Reese's Pieces®, right?

- 1 Make the brownies: Melt the butter and chopped chocolate in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat, allow to cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then pour into a large mixing bowl.
- 2 Adjust the oven rack to the lower third position and preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line the bottom and sides of a 9 x 13-in (23 x 33cm) baking pan with aluminum foil or parchment paper, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the brownies once they have cooled. Spray lightly with nonstick spray.
- 3 Whisk the sugar and brown sugar into the cooled chocolate-butter mixture. Add the eggs, one at a time, whisking until smooth after each addition. Whisk in the vanilla. Gently fold in the salt, flour, and cocoa powder.
- 4 Pour batter into the prepared baking pan and bake for 34–35 minutes, or until the brownies begin to pull away from the edges of the pan. A toothpick inserted in the center should come out with only a few moist crumbs when done. All ovens are different, so keep an eye on the brownies after 30 minutes and use the toothpick test to see when yours are finished. You do not want to overbake brownies!
- 5 Allow to cool completely in the pan set on a wire rack. Once completely cooled, remove the brownies from the pan by lifting out the aluminum foil, then invert onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, peel away foil, and turn back over. Do not cut into squares yet. Make sure there is room in your refrigerator because you will need to place the baking sheet in the refrigerator in step 6 and again in step 7.
- 6 Make the peanut butter filling: With a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter and peanut butter together on medium-high speed in a large bowl until completely smooth and creamy, about 3 minutes. Add confectioners' sugar, milk, and vanilla extract with the mixer running on low. Increase the mixer to high speed and beat for 2 minutes. The mixture will be very thick. Using a large offset spatula or a knife, spread evenly on top of the brownies. It may look like there is too much peanut butter filling, but spread it on nice and thick. Transfer the brownies to the refrigerator and allow to chill as you prepare the chocolate topping.
- 7 Make the chocolate topping: Melt the butter and chocolate chips in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes. Once melted and smooth, remove pan from the heat. Remove brownies from the refrigerator and pour the chocolate topping over the peanut butter filling.

Gently spread it around with a large offset spatula or knife. Immediately sprinkle with Reese's Pieces®. Place the baking sheet in the refrigerator and chill for 1 hour (and up to 4 hours) to set the chocolate.

- 8 Once chilled, remove from the refrigerator and cut into squares. For neat cutting, make very quick cuts, using a very sharp large knife, and wiping the knife with a paper towel between each cut. Prepared brownies can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.



SALLY SAYS: The easiest way to chop up the Reese's Pieces® is to pulse them in a food processor a few times. If you do not own one, place the candies in a large zipped-top bag, seal shut, and roll with a rolling pin until coarsely crushed. You can always leave the candies whole, too.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: If you wish to get a small head start, prepare the brownie layer a day in advance; keep it covered tightly at room temperature and frost/assemble the day of serving. For a bigger head start, prepared brownies can be frozen up to 2 months; thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature before serving.





PEANUT BUTTER CUP ICE CREAM

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 4–12 hours depending on the ice cream maker

Makes: 1 generous quart (1L)

INGREDIENTS

2 large eggs

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup (133g) sugar

1 cup (240ml) whole milk

2 cups (475ml) heavy cream

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (130g) creamy peanut butter

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (24 minis; 212g) chopped peanut butter cups

hot fudge sauce, for serving (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

ice cream maker

Nothing is more satisfying than three generous scoops of ice cream on a hot summer afternoon. But imagine diving headfirst into a mountain of creamy homemade peanut butter ice cream packed with peanut butter cups. Things are about to get seriously delicious.

- 1 Whisk the eggs in a large mixing bowl until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Whisk in the sugar until combined, then whisk in the milk and cream. Remove 1 cup of the mixture and pour into a medium-size mixing bowl. Whisk into that medium bowl the peanut butter until combined, then pour into the original large mixing bowl.
- 2 Transfer the mixture into an ice cream maker and churn according to the manufacturer's instructions. When ice cream is the consistency of soft-serve, quickly scoop into a freezer-safe airtight container and stir in the peanut butter cups until evenly distributed. Enjoy the soft ice cream now or cover and freeze for about 3 hours to yield a firmer texture. To serve, scoop ice cream into individual bowls and, if desired, drizzle with hot fudge.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: For the best taste and texture, cover tightly and store ice cream in the freezer for no longer than 2 weeks. With ice cream this good, it won't even last that long!



SALLY SAYS: This homemade ice cream can be prepared in any 1-qt (1L) or higher ice cream maker. I simply use an ice cream maker attachment for my stand mixer.

MINT CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE

Prep time: 45 minutes

Total time: 6 hours, 45 minutes

Makes: 8 servings

CRUST

20 Oreo® cookies (regular, Double Stuf, or any creme-filled chocolate cookie)

¼ cup (½ stick; 57g) unsalted butter, melted

FILLING

2½ cups (590ml) whole milk

½ cup (67g) sugar

¼ tsp salt

6 large egg yolks

2 tbsp cornstarch

6 tbsp butter (¾ stick; 85g), cut into 6 equal pieces

8oz semi-sweet chocolate, finely chopped

1 tsp vanilla extract

½ tsp peppermint extract

TOPPING

1 cup (240ml) cold heavy cream

1 tbsp confectioners' sugar

½ tsp vanilla extract

½ cup (60g) chopped Andes® Creme de Menthe Thins

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

food processor or blender

9-in (23cm) pie dish

handheld or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment

Every time I've made my chocolate cream pie, guests leave happy with the written recipe in hand. The last time I made it, I decided to add peppermint extract and chopped Andes® mints. The chocolate filling is a cross between thick chocolate pudding and smooth custard. The top is covered with fresh whipped cream and, when chilled properly, the pie slices easily and neatly. If I'm going to use the word "addictive" to describe any recipe in this cookbook, it's this mint chocolate pie.

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
- 2 Make the crust: In a food processor or blender, pulse the whole Oreos® into a fine crumb. Pour the cookie crumbs into a medium-size bowl and stir in melted butter until combined. Press the mixture evenly into the bottom and up the sides of a 9-in (23cm) pie dish. Use the bottom of a small glass or measuring cup to firmly press it down. Bake until the crust appears set, about 12–14 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in pie dish on a wire rack as you prepare the filling.
- 3 Make the filling: Combine the whole milk, sugar, and salt in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Whisk until all the sugar has dissolved, then bring to a gentle simmer, whisking occasionally.
- 4 Working quickly as the whole milk mixture begins to simmer, whisk the egg yolks and cornstarch together in a medium-size heatproof bowl until thick and smooth. Very slowly whisk in 1 cup (240ml) of the simmering whole milk mixture to slightly warm the egg yolk mixture. Then slowly whisk the egg yolk mixture into the remaining whole milk mixture in the saucepan. While continuing to slowly whisk, cook until the mixture is thick and big bubbles begin to burst on the surface. Remove pan from the heat and whisk in the butter, chocolate, and vanilla and peppermint extracts until completely smooth.
- 5 Pour filling into the cooled crust, smoothing the top with a rubber spatula. Place a sheet of plastic wrap on top of the surface and refrigerate until filling is set, about 4–6 hours.
- 6 Make the topping: When ready to serve the pie, with a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, beat the cream, confectioners' sugar, and vanilla extract on low speed in a large bowl until combined, about 1 minute. Increase the speed to high and beat until soft peaks form, about 2–3 minutes. Spread whipped cream over pie and garnish with chopped Andes® mints. Use a sharp knife to make neat cuts and serve chilled.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: The crust and filling can be prepared and assembled up to 4 days in advance. Cover tightly and store in the refrigerator. Prepare the whipped cream and garnish immediately before serving. Cover leftovers tightly and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.





DIRT 'N' GUMMY WORMS PARFAITS

Prep time: 7 hours

Total time: 7 hours

Makes: 6 parfaits

FILLING

2½ cups (590ml) whole milk

⅓ cup (67g) sugar

⅛ tsp salt

6 large egg yolks

2 tbsp cornstarch

6 tbsp butter (¼ stick; 85g),
cut into 6 equal pieces

8oz semi-sweet chocolate, finely
chopped

1 tsp vanilla extract

24 Oreos®

24 gummy worms

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

food processor or blender

Dirt is a childhood favorite dessert combining gummy worms, crushed Oreos® (the dirt!), and a chocolate pudding mixture. I remember eating it at Halloween parties in grade school, where it was often served in a little faux flowerpot. Seriously, how cute is that? For these parfaits, I use the same chocolate filling recipe that I use in my Mint Chocolate Cream Pie (page 184). Gummy worms are an obvious necessity, making this a treat kids will love. I'm not embarrassed to say this thirty-year-old loves it, too. . . .

- 1 Make the filling: Combine the whole milk, sugar, and salt in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Whisk until all the sugar has dissolved, then bring to a gentle simmer, whisking occasionally.
- 2 Working quickly as the whole milk mixture begins to simmer, whisk the egg yolks and cornstarch together in a medium-size heatproof bowl until thick and smooth. Very slowly whisk in 1 cup (240ml) of the simmering whole milk mixture to slightly warm the egg yolk mixture. Then slowly whisk the egg yolk mixture into the remaining whole milk mixture in the saucepan. While continuing to slowly whisk, cook until the mixture is thick and big bubbles begin to burst on the surface. Remove pan from the heat and whisk in the butter, chocolate, and vanilla and peppermint extracts until completely smooth.
- 3 Pour the warm mixture into a large bowl. Place a sheet of plastic wrap on top of the surface of the filling and refrigerate until set, about 4–6 hours. Makes about 3 cups (852g).
- 4 Process the Oreos® in a food processor or blender until finely crushed. Once the chocolate pudding mixture has set, remove from the refrigerator and begin layering your parfaits. Layer 2 tablespoons of crushed Oreos®, then ½ cup (142g) of the chocolate pudding mixture, then 2 more tablespoons of crushed Oreos®. Top each with 4 gummy worms. Serve cold.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: These are great make-ahead treats for parties. Prep the filling up to 3 days in advance, keeping it tightly covered in the refrigerator until ready to use. Assemble the parfaits up to 4–5 hours in advance. Any longer than that, the bottom layer of crushed Oreos® will get soggy.

BUTTERFINGER[®] SCOTCHEROOS

Prep time: 30 minutes

Total time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Makes: 16 bars

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (240ml) honey
- 1 cup plus 1 tbsp (274g) creamy peanut butter, divided
- 1 cup (240g) butterscotch morsels, divided
- 4½ cups (113g) crispy rice cereal
- 1 cup (125g) chopped Butterfinger[®] candy bars (5–6 fun-size bars), divided
- ½ cup (91g) milk chocolate chips

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 9-in (23cm) square baking pan

Scotcheroos are no-bake treats combining butterscotch morsels, peanut butter, and chocolate—fun to make, delicious to eat, and enjoyable to say. In my opinion, they're the perfect dessert for Butterfinger[®] candy bars. This recipe is my version of the scotcheroo—heavy on the peanut butter, generous with the butterscotch, and overloaded on candy bars. These treats are crispy, chewy, chocolaty, dense—and you need to make them right now.

- 1 Line a 9-in (23cm) square baking pan with aluminum foil or parchment paper, leaving enough overhang on the sides to easily remove the bars after they have chilled. Set aside.
- 2 Melt the honey, 1 cup (258g) peanut butter, and ½ cup (120g) butterscotch morsels together in a medium saucepan over low-medium heat. Stir constantly with a heatproof rubber spatula or wooden spoon until smooth, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the cereal and half of the chopped candy bars until combined. The chocolate on the candy bars will melt—this is okay!
- 3 Spoon mixture into the prepared pan and use a rubber spatula to firmly press the mixture into the pan. The key is to press firmly so the bars are dense and retain their shape when cut. Set aside.
- 4 Combine the remaining 1 tablespoon peanut butter, ½ cup (120g) butterscotch morsels, and the chocolate chips in a small heatproof bowl. Melt in the microwave on 50 percent power in 20-second increments, stirring after each increment, until completely smooth and melted. Spread evenly over cereal bars. Sprinkle with remaining chopped candy bars.
- 5 Cover tightly with aluminum foil or plastic wrap, then refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Once chilled, remove from the pan using the overhang on the sides, invert onto cutting board, peel away foil, and cut into squares.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Store the bars in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week. To freeze, place bars in layers separated by parchment or wax paper in airtight container. Freeze for up to 1 month; let stand at room temperature for 1 hour before serving.



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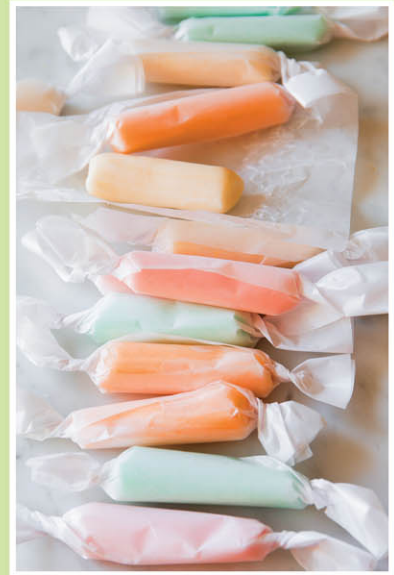
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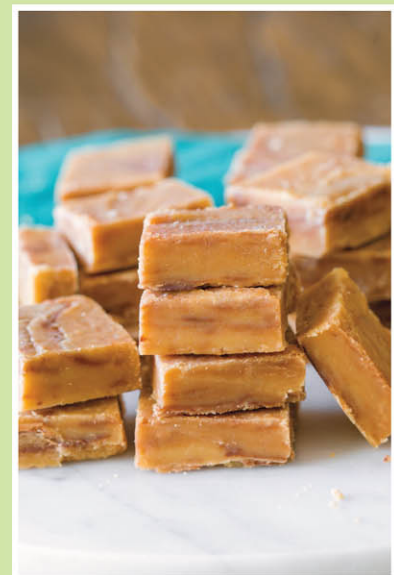
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SALLY IS BACK, AND SHE'S SWEETER THAN EVER!



TRUFFLES, MARSHMALLOWS, FUDGE . . . OH MY!



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