



February 2006 Community Newsletter

Happy 2006! After a brief hiatus, the DC newsletter is back, with all of the great information and r enjoy! Be sure to visit the site soon—as always, the members are posting recipes and ideas fast a and there are some new forums, too. Stop by and prepare a virtual meal with other members in o [with us! forum](#).

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Recipes of the Month

As we celebrate Valentine's Day, February is the month for love, but more importantly, for candy! few of our DC member's tried-and-true—and favorite—candy recipes. Go ahead and indulge your s

Butterscotch

Ishbel

1 lb granulated sugar
quarter pint hot water (a quarter of an Imperial pint is about 150 ml, or about 5 oz)
quarter teaspoon cream of tartar
3 oz UNSALTED butter
quarter tsp of vanilla essence.

Put sugar and water into large heavy based pan. Dissolve sugar and add cream of tartar. Bring to l degrees F). Remove pan from heat and add the butter in small pieces. Return to heat and continue 280 degrees F.

Remove from heat and stir in vanilla essence. Put mixture into well oiled shallow tin (11" x 7" is th When it is almost cold mark it into squares (or if you want to pretend it's the same as the shop-boi rectangles!) When cold, break into the squares/rectangles and wrap in metallic gift paper.

Chocolate Cherry Creams

Raine

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
1/3 cup evaporated milk
1 1/2 cups sifted confectioners' sugar
1/3 cup drained and minced maraschino cherries
1 1/4 cups sweetened coconut

Melt the chocolate and milk over low heat while stirring. Remove from heat.
Stir in the powdered sugar and cherries, mix well. Chill until the mixture is cool enough to handle.
inch balls and roll in the coconut.

Chill at least 4 hours until ready to serve.

Sugar-free sweet and sour gummy hearts

Piccolina

*Note: A homemade take on the classic gummy candy, which uses sugar-free ingredients, yet still c
tasting sweet. You can use any shaped cookie cutters that you like or just slice the "candy" into sm*

*I'll be the first to admit that it's not food coloring free/chemical free, but it does call for sugar-free
(it can also be made with the sugary versions of these same food). If you're looking for a sugar-fre
treat for yourself or someone special (kids love these too!) this is such a fun idea.*

3 envelopes of plain powder (unflavored) gelatin

1 package of sugar-free Kool-aid, any flavor (option, this is what will give them a slightly sour tang

2 packages of any flavor of Jell-o (if you want the hearts to be red try to pick a red flavor of both J
Kool-aid)

1 cup of boiling water (250 ml)

First lightly coat a 8x8 inch (or thereabouts) sized baking pan with a thin layer of Pam spray or oth
(you don't need much).

Combine the gelatin, Jell-o and Kool-aid (if using) in a large mixing bowl, and briskly whisk in the c
water.

Stir to combine (it will be a little bit thick, don't worry about that) and pour into your prepared pan
Set the pan into the fridge and chill until set (at least 4 hours) or overnight (if not using the same
with cling film).

Once the mixture is set cut out heart shapes with a small cookie cutter, or even free-hand if you'd
transfer to a plate and put back in the fridge, where they will keep covered for up to four days.

Depending on the size of your cookie cutters you will get about 8-12 hearts

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White Chocolate Coconut-Ginger Truffles

Marmalady

1 cup heavy cream

1 ½ lbs white chocolate

2 Tbsp unsalted butter

1 1/2 tsp vanilla

1/3 cup minced candied ginger

Confectioner's sugar for rolling in

Heat cream and vanilla to a simmer (I used the microwave). Pour over the chocolate, add the butter until smooth. Stir in the ginger. Cover and chill for 3 hours. Scoop w/a teaspoon or small scoop onto waxed paper. Roll into balls, roll in confectioner's sugar. Chill at least 2 hours. (Mine will go in the fridge, for cookie trays) I'm also going to put a couple of dragees on top, after they're rolled.

I'm at the 'chill 3 hours' stage right now, but boy did the melted mixture taste awesome!

Chocolate Dessert Cups

Note: These easy-to-cups look impressive and are a great way to serve chocolate mousse, pudding or fresh fruit.

Ingredients:

2 lb white, milk, or semisweet chocolate, chopped

Equipment:

6-oz or 8-oz glasses

12 or more pieces cellophane, 12"x12" (15"x15" if using 8 oz cups)

Cookie sheets

Melt chocolate over double boilers, using a slightly cooler temperature for white chocolate. Place the sheet in the refrigerator. Fold the cellophane up and over the glasses, tucking excess into the glasses to be the molds for your chocolate cups. Make sure that the pleats in the cellophane aren't too tight-make the cups flare, and if they're too tight the chocolate will break when you peel away the cellophane.

Dip the wrapped glasses into the chocolate as high as you want the cup to be. Take the glass out of the chocolate, turn it upside down (base of the glass facing up), and place on the sheet pan. Refrigerate for an hour.

When ready to use, take one glass out of the refrigerator at a time so they stay chilled. Try to avoid touching the chocolate with your fingers, as it will melt instantly. Hold the cup with a piece of wax or parchment paper. Pull the cellophane towards and against the glass and slide the glass out of the chocolate cup. Hold the chocolate at the bottom and pull the cellophane down and away from the chocolate and into the center of the cup. Discard cellophane.

Return the completed cup to the refrigerator until all others are ready.

Terms and Techniques

By GB

With Valentine's Day upon us, what better time to talk about candy? One of the first things to learn about making candy is the 5 stages of sugar. Most candy thermometers list not only temperature, but also what it corresponds to, but if you don't have a thermometer then you can use the following guide to know where your sugar is in at any point in time.

The 5 stages of sugar

Stage 1 is the Soft-ball stage. 235° F–240° F. At this stage, if you were to drop some of the sugar in water it would form a soft ball. When you take the ball out of the water it will flatten on its own and be mushy.

Stage 2 is the Firm-Ball stage. 245° F–250° F. When dropped in water it will form a harder ball. It won't flatten on its own, but if you apply a little pressure then it can be squished by your finger.

Stage 3 is the Hard-Ball stage. 250° F–265° F. When dropped into water the sugar will form a ball. You can squish it a little, but it will not flatten out.

Stage 4 is the Soft-Crack Stage. 270° F–290° F. When dropped into water the sugar will form threads that are flexible when removed from the water.

Stage 5 is the Hard-Crack Stage. 300° F–310° F. This will form threads like in stage 4, but they are brittle. If you try to bend them then they will crack and break.

OK now go make some candy!

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Just a Bite—News, Trivia, and More

Compiled by PA Baker

Courtesy of www.foodreference.com

February is:

2005 - Bake for Family Fun Month

Berry Fresh in the Sunshine State Month

Canned Food Month

Celebration of Chocolate

Chocolate Month

Great American Pies Month

National Grapefruit Month

National Hot Breakfast Month

National Potato Month

National Snack Food Month

North Carolina Sweet Potato Month

Return Shopping Carts to the Supermarket Month

Meet your Neighbors!

Cook of the Month—MrsMac

By Alix

MrsMac, our featured cook this month, has been a member with DiscussCooking for six months and is from Sydney, Australia. She is married, and has two daughters with a third child on the way. (Keep on when the baby is due please!) She is a teacher, which would explain why she is so good about the questions she sees on DC. I asked her how she found us and she told me that her husband is a band forum and she felt a bit left out, so he Googled and found DC for her. What a guy! As much as she has contributed to our little site, she has also learned a few things. "I have learnt so many new things I would never have found, tips, ideas and I have met a wonderful group of people who feel like friends after ever having met them. I have also learnt that I love Nabisco Nutter Butter cookies!"

I asked MrsMac how she learned to cook and she told me, "My mum did a lot of cooking when I was little. I baked all our cakes, biscuits and even made cordial. I don't think she particularly loved cooking but I did well. I used to want to cook with her but early on we realized we clashed in the kitchen so mum took over the reign with the proviso that whatever I did I cleaned up afterwards! By age 10 or 11, I was making dinners for my parents and writing a menu and making the lounge room into a restaurant! (My little sister pressed into service as a waiter.)" Sounds like a wonderful way to grow up, and what initiative! And this led right into one of her most cherished cooking memories. "Favorite cooking memory? I once cooked a meal for mum and dad when I was about 14 and my mum who wasn't one for effusive praise said 'darling you have surpassed yourself.'"

MrsMac's specialty is baking. And she is **good** at it. Check out all the wonderful recipes she posts. "I love slices, cakes and muffins. I often take things into work for everyone for morning tea and if I make a special morning tea the boss pays me to make the food which is flattering." Even though she has been cooking since she was a youngster, she admits to the occasional disaster. "Any disasters? Heaps! I once put too much sugar out of an apricot loaf recently! A few weeks ago I was using a new recipe book and I was didn't think about the quantities and followed it to the letter- guess what? I think 5 teaspoons of butter is too much in muffins!!!" YIKES! I wonder how big those muffins grew? Now don't let that last stop off. She has shared her most requested recipe with us, and it looks like a keeper:

Sarah's Mum's friend's Slice

Every time I make it someone asks for the recipe.

1 pkg (250g) Nice biscuits (they are Australian its pronounced niece- use any sweet plain cookie)
150g melted butter

Process biscuits until crumbs then mix in melted butter. Press into slice tin and top with (in this order) chocolate chips, 1/2 cup chopped walnuts, 1 cup coconut and a tin of condensed milk.

Bake at 150 C for 30 minutes.

Parting Thoughts

"Caramels are only a fad. Chocolate is a permanent thing."
Milton Snavely Hershey (1857-1945) Founded Hershey Chocolate Co 1903.

"Research tells us fourteen out of any ten individuals likes chocolate."
Sandra Boynton

"As with most fine things, chocolate has its season. There is a simple memory aid that you can use whether it is the correct time to order chocolate dishes: any month whose name contains the letter the proper time for chocolate."
Sandra Boynton, 'Chocolate: The Consuming Passion'

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Interested in Contributing to Discuss Cooking's monthly newsletter?

To find out how, or to share your ideas, send a PM to PA Baker.

How to get support:

If you are having difficulties please take a moment to look at the Frequently Asked Questions:

http://www.discusscooking.com/forums/faq.php?faq=vb_faq

For more support please checkout the "help & ideas" forum at:

<http://www.discusscooking.com/forums/f29/>

If you still have issues, you can open a help desk ticket by sending an email to

<http://www.discusscooking.com/forums/sendmessage.php>

To remove yourself from these emails please uncheck the option in your control panel to "Receive Email from Administrators" via this link (requires login):

<http://www.discusscooking.com/forums/profile.php?do=editoptions>
