

HOUSEHOLD.

Christmas Candies and How to Make Them.

There is an art in candy making as in most things, but to succeed one needs not only patience, but a genuine fondness for the work. This last quality most people have, especially the little ones, and they will no doubt take genuine interest in the preparation of their Christmas supply of sweets if some grown person will help them. The following recipes are from one of the best authorities and may be considered absolutely reliable:

To make French Cream or Fondant, which is the basis of almost all French bonbons, put two pounds of granulated white sugar with half a pint of hot water in a tin pan and bring it sharply to a boil. Allow it to boil steadily for eight minutes without touching or stirring; as soon as it begins to look thick test it by dropping a little from the spoon, and if it threads, lift the pan from the range and rub a small spoonful of the mixture against the sides of a basin. If it becomes creamy and balls easily between the fingers, pour the whole into a basin and let it set quite cold; beat it sharply with a large spoon or china pestle, till it becomes a smooth kind of pomade like cold cream. If the sugar is not sufficiently cooked to ball easily, replace it on the fire, watching it carefully for a minute or two, till it reaches the desired temperature. If, on the contrary, owing to accident or inattention, it has overboiled and become sugary, add a few spoonfuls of water, return the pan to the fire and begin all over.

It is well to begin making this cream in very small quantities at first, till perfection is attained, as though easy to describe, it requires close attention and much quickness to get it perfectly right. When, however, the secret is mastered, it may be made in the quantities given above, or even larger ones (only remember the larger the quantities the quicker must be the work!), as it keeps well for a considerable time if stocked in a closed jar. When required for use, this jar should be stood in a pan three parts full of boiling water, and stirred carefully till melted to the proper consistency. It is quite worth the while to master the art of fondant making, as so many delicate sweets can be made with it. For instance, pour a little fondant into a basin (standing in hot water), and flavor to taste with any essence you please, coloring it to suit the flavorings; thus for essence of peppermint, color the mixture a faint green, roll it on a slightly oiled slab into a long roll rather thinner than your little finger, and cut it with the scissors into three-quarter inch lengths; these when dry will give peppermint creams; if colored a soft violet with 'damson blue' vegetable coloring, and flavored with violet syrup, it makes a very delicate bonbon, especially if a crystallized violet be pressed on to each; or use a drop or two of carmine, flavor with rose water or maraschino and garnish with crystallized rose leaves; in short, you can vary these fondants to suit any decorations you require.

Nut creams, again, are delicious, and are easy to make when French cream presents no difficulty. Melt a little of the fondant till fairly thin, flavor to taste with coffee, stir it in as many blanched and chopped nuts as it will take up, and leave it till stiff, then dip each into semi-liquid fondant, and set it aside till dry, the covering fondant being colored and flavored to taste. Dates and French plums can be converted into most festive dessert sweets by stoning them, inserting a roll of daintily colored and flavored fondant into each, pressing the fruit well round the cream, and either leaving it plain or dipping it into sugar boiled to the crack to glaze it. Of course, color must be studied, as the contrast between the fruit and the roll of fondant showing at each end constitutes much of the beauty

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of the sweet. For instance, peppermint, or pistachio, suits plums, rosewater and pink icing the dates, etc. Walnut cream also may be made by breaking off pieces of the fondant and patting them out between your hands till about the size and twice the thickness of a quarter, then press a carefully shelled and halved walnut kernel on to each side, leave them till set, when they are dipped in sugar boiled to the crack. The fondant may naturally be colored and flavored to taste, coffee-flavored fondant is very nice for this purpose. In short, there is no end to the variety that may be obtained in this way.

To make Molasses Candy, put into a pan a pint of molasses, half a pound of brown sugar, half a teaspoonful of vinegar and one ounce of butter. Stir all this over the fire to the 'crack,' that is, till on a piece being dropped into cold water it sets at once and falls to the bottom of the dish with a tinkle like glass; then pour it on the oiled slab. When cool enough to handle (be careful about this, as hot candy will burn frightfully) turn in the edges and make it all into a ball; now fix it on a strong hook and pull it all into even strips then cut into pieces with the scissors. To pull candy properly is something of an art. To do it successfully, oil or butter the hands well. Have a good stout hook firmly fastened to the wall or window, and, when the candy is cool enough to handle, lift up the mass and throw it over the hook; now pull it towards you, making the candy and not your hands move, or you will blister your hands all over before the candy is half pulled. When you find the candy beginning to break from the hook, throw it back over it again, and so keep on till it is finished.

For Vanilla Candy, boil together, without stirring, from twenty minutes to half an hour two pounds of granulated sugar, one-third of a pint of water, one-sixth of a pint of vinegar, a piece of butter the size of an egg, and one tablespoon glycerine; when on dropping a little of this into cold water it hardens at once add to it a small teaspoon of cream of tartar, pour it all on to well-buttered plates to cool, and pour two teaspoons of essence of vanilla over the top. Let it cool, then pull it till it becomes beautifully white, and cut it with the scissors into sticks, etc., as you please. If kept a week it turns quite creamy.

To make Butterscotch, put into a pan

half a pound of brown sugar, a gill of water, a teaspoon of vinegar, and about half an ounce of butter, and boil together for twenty minutes, then pour it into buttered tins or plates, marking it out as it cools with the back of a knife. Flavor to taste as you pour it into the tins.

For Coconut Candy boil one pound, ten ounces of sugar in half a pint of water to the 'ball,' then stir into it half a large coconut thinly shredded, and let the sugar just boil through it; now lift the pan from the fire, rub a little of the sugar against the sides of the pan, and then stir this rubbed sugar through it all till the mass looks 'grained' all over, when you turn it into buttered or oiled tins, and mark it out in bars before it sets.

To those who can only get the cheaper grades of factory candy it is well worth while to take time and trouble over these, and one person can in a day make from 15 to 20 lbs., making up the creams in the evening, when the older children will delight in helping.

New Year Cakes for Children.

Mix a good cup-cake batter and divide into two portions. Flavor one portion with vanilla and bake in two thin sheets. To the second portion add almonds blanched and cut in strips, finely cut candied fruits of various colors, cut figs and angelica and a sprinkling of the little pink and white 'hundreds and thousands.' Bake this batter in a sheet one inch thick. Prepare also an icing by boiling together one pint of sugar and one cupful of water until a little dropped into cold water can be rolled to a very soft ball between the fingers; do not stir the syrup after the sugar is dissolved or it will surely granulate. When it has reached the ball stage take quickly from the fire and let stand until it is lukewarm. Then turn slowly and steadily until the syrup clouds and thickens; when too stiff to be stirred with the spoon take it in the hands and knead and work like dough until it is very smooth and soft. This icing is what is known to confectioners as fondant, and if covered closely so that it is safe from all contact with the air it can be kept for weeks. When needed the required amount is taken off and put into a cup which is standing in a pan of hot water. Mash and beat with a fork until it is smooth and as soft as cream,