

Title:

The Secret of Christmas Candies

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Summary:

What is Christmas without treats? Does it really seem like Christmas without them? All those delicious candies are a delight fit for the holidays.

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Article Body:

What is Christmas without treats? Does it really seem like Christmas without them? All those delicious candies are a delight fit for the holidays.

Candy making is more of an art but there is some science to it. You must balance creativity with skill and incorporate some technical procedures that are sometimes hard to comprehend.

Wait, here's where we can help.

The trick to candy perfection is knowledge, so what do you need to know this holiday season to keep your sweets just as delightful as the occasion? Easy, you just need to know a little bit about the basics on how candy is made, starting with that basic candy building block, sugar. Well what's so special about sugar, you ask? Sugar has some special properties that make it the perfect choice for candy recipes.

Now, what special properties, you ask? Sugar crystals are solid at room temperature, but once you put these sugar crystals in water, they dissolve, this is the step-one in candy-making, this forms a clear solution. Apply heat and hold at "just right" temperatures and then this sweet elixir is allowed to boil at very at these specific temperatures. In doing so chemical changes or reactions occur in the sugar; this is because heat breaks the crystals apart into molecules, later the molecules will get back together forming sugar crystals again as the sugar syrup cools. This basis of candy making the backbone of all candies.

You need to understand the care required for the candy before you can ensure

that they're served in the optimal state, you want to give your sweets the proper care and storage they need. Here's what you'll need to know:

Although there are many different varieties, as many as imagination will allow, there are only three main types of candy. They can usually be classified as one of the following, or a combination of the following:

First, we have the hard candy. Hard candy is made with the highest sugar content. Characteristically, they include various flavors and colors. Some of the most classic hard candies include peppermint sticks and a variety of different mints, does anyone remember rock candy?. Hard candy should be stored at temperatures ranging from 10-21°C for best results, and a relative humidity of 40%.

Second, are the softer candies. In this category we have marshmallows, jellies, and nougats etc. These sweets contain mostly sugar, as well as a low percentage of other ingredients that do not solidify like pure sugar. For optimum results, these soft candies should be stored at temperatures ranging from 24-27°C, with a relative humidity of 45-40%.

Third, we look at candies that contain a majority of other ingredients rather than being heavily concentrated on sugars. In this group, we'll find fudge, chocolates, sugar- or chocolate-covered raisins or nuts, my personal favorite, caramels, and much, much more.

In terms of storage, this group is the trickiest. Caramels are optimum at temperatures ranging from 21-27°C, while chocolates are best at the temperature range of 16-18°C, with a 50% relative humidity. It's definitely worth paying attention to to get the most from this exquisite delicacy called candy.

The amount of moisture that candy gains will affect the storage and shelf life of most candies, if they last that long ;-)

Storing Your Candies

Careful storage will enable your magical Christmas candies to be the best nature intended it to be, remaining firm but not hard, soft but not sticky. No matter what age you are, you can always appreciate the taste of good quality candy.