

CANDY CLASS : Nut Brittle



STEP 1

ACTION: Prepare a baking sheet with a silicone mat or grease the pan well. Measure all ingredients. Keep the thermometer near the stovetop. In a medium saucepan, combine water, sugar, and corn syrup. Cover with a loose-fitting lid and heat to 270 degrees F. Do NOT stir.

SCIENCE

Regular table sugar is sucrose. It transitions from a crystalline to a liquid state during the cooking process. As water and heat are applied, sucrose splits into glucose and fructose. This is called inversion. Soft crack stage is 270 degrees F.



STEP 2

ACTION: Add peanuts. Stir the mixture constantly until it reaches 300 degrees F. Remove from heat. Add butter and baking soda while steadily stirring. The mixture will expand. When the butter is completely melted, pour the candy onto a prepared baking sheet.

SCIENCE

Hard crack stage is 300 degrees F. Sugar turns amber because it is accumulating small amounts of acid. Acid reacts with the alkaline baking soda to release bubbles of carbon dioxide (CO₂). This is the same gas that makes bread rise and some drinks fizzy. The bubbles trapped in the sugar make the candy brittle.



STEP 3

ACTION: Spread the hot candy on the baking sheet. Cool 30 to 60 minutes. Break into shards. Eat or store in an airtight container.

SCIENCE

The sugar will want to crystallize again, but we added inverted sugar (corn syrup) that acts as a catalyst. A catalyst is something that can speed up a chemical reaction but will not change itself. In this case, the corn syrup keeps the granulated sugar from recrystallizing.

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

- Start with a clean work area and clean hands.
- Collect your equipment.
- Make sure that your pans, measuring cups, utensils, and other tools are clean.
- Measure your ingredients.

INGREDIENTS

- 1¼ cup nuts of your choice, chopped to peanut size
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda

EQUIPMENT

- Baking pan, greased or lined with a silicone mat
- Small sauce pot with lid
- Candy thermometer
- Silicone or wooden spatula
- Silicone basting brush (optional)