

HOMEMADE ALMOND TOFFEE WITH CHOCOLATE

Thanks to my sister-in-law Trish, I can share this scrumptious, EASY method to make almond toffee. There are many ways to make such a candy, but I LOVE this version because it is super easy and wonderfully delicious.

Sugar and chocolate are quite sensitive to heat and humidity. I wouldn't recommend making this candy in the summertime unless you can control heat / humidity to keep the room cool, about 68-70 degrees F., with low humidity.

Sugar is very hot when boiled, so be careful. Have all your tools and ingredients ready to use. Once sugar turns to a dark caramel, you must work quickly to spread it on the pan...before it burns in the pot...before it sets on the sheet pan.

If you use sliced or slivered almonds, it will still taste good though not as great. Crushed almonds with skin give this candy the best taste and texture. You get some large pieces of almonds, and some smaller pieces. If using whole, raw almonds, you can roast the almonds in the oven for a few minutes on a dry baking sheet, just till they start to give off a nice aroma. Cool the almonds completely before crushing. I suppose you could also use chopped almonds with the skin.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

2.5 c. **crushed almonds, with skin**, unsalted, dry roasted (*buy the almonds whole...then crush*)

Set 2

6 regular sized bars of **Hershey's Milk Chocolate**, broken at the scored lines of the bar (*I don't recommend using a store brand of chocolate! In fact, I would prefer to use Dove milk or semi-sweet chocolate when possible.*)

Set 3

3 sticks **SALTED** butter

1.5 c. sugar

1/3 c. water

TOOLS: *1 non-stick pot (at least 5 inches deep), long, large wooden spoon, spreading / baking spatula, half a stainless steel or aluminum sheet pan (at least a 1 inch lip, larger than a 9x13), cooling rack or trivets, 2 Ziploc freezer bags, wax paper, meat tenderizer or hammer, candy thermometer (optional)*

DIRECTIONS

1. Place whole almonds in a freezer bag. Put this freezer bag in the second bag. Using the flat side of a meat tenderizer, hammer the almonds to crush them. You want some almond pieces to be large, some to be small.
2. Measure 1.5 cups of crushed almonds and set aside.
3. Measure 1 cup of crushed almonds into another container. Set aside.
4. Set a cooling rack on the counter, with the sheet pan on top. Leave on the counter till ready to pour the toffee.
5. Place the butter, then sugar, then water in the non-stick pot. Set the heat to half way between medium and medium-high (about the position of the 22nd minute on the clock).
6. Allow ingredients to come to a boil **WITHOUT STIRRING**. **DO NOT** stir.
7. Mixture will continue to a bubbly, rolling boil.

8. Once the center of the mixture starts to turn from an opaque color to a very light caramel, add 1.5 cups of crushed almonds. The temperature will be about 245 to 250 degrees.
9. Begin stirring the mixture once you add the almonds.
10. Continue to stir until the mixture turns to a slightly darker color.
11. As you stir and the mixture darkens, you will notice the mixture at the edge of the pot start to darken more than the mixture in the center. The sugar will be about 285 to 290 degrees. It's ready to pour.
12. Pour the mix along the center part of the pan, lengthwise. Set the pot on a trivet or an unused burner on the stove.
13. Using the wooden spoon or an icing spatula, quickly spread the mixture toward all the edges of the pan. Don't cover the entire half-sheet pan otherwise the toffee will be too thin.
14. The toffee will set / harden some while spreading. You will be able to coax it a little to cover any holes created while spreading the mixture.
15. Take the Hershey chocolate pieces and arrange over the toffee, working from the edges inward, in a circular pattern.
16. After a minute, spread the melted chocolate to cover the toffee.
17. Sprinkle the remaining 1 cup of crushed almonds over the chocolate.
18. Wait 5 minutes.
19. Lay 1-2 sheets of wax paper over the pan.
20. Use a clean spatula or your hands (**CAREFUL...the pan is hot**) to gently press the nuts into the chocolate.
21. Leave in a cool room for about 30 minutes.
22. Set in the fridge or in a VERY COLD room for several hours to allow the chocolate to set.
23. If placing candy in the fridge (overnight is fine), bring "almond roca" to room temperature before serving.

Note: When refrigerated, the toffee will lighten in color. This is fine. The candy will have to come to room temperature to regain its darker color.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of PaulaQ.com.