

Chocolate Cheese Fudge

The afternoon I finished testing this recipe, I took a plate of the fudge outside to the park to share with some of my lady friends. As they were oohing and aahing over the fudge, one of them said, "Oh, my goodness, Paula, it's wonderful."

Her mouth dropped open after I told her the fudge was made with Velveeta cheese. "You're sh—ing me!" one of them said, which is not the language these ladies normally use! After all, this is the South.

I hope that when you serve it, you have as much fun as I did. This one is definitely a "Don't Miss!"

½ pound Velveeta cheese, sliced

1 cup (2 sticks) butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 cup chopped nuts

Two 16-ounce packages confectioners' sugar

½ cup cocoa

1. Spray lightly the bottom of a 9-inch square baking pan with vegetable oil cooking spray.

2. Over medium heat, in a saucepan, melt the cheese and butter together, stirring constantly until smooth. Remove from the heat. Add the vanilla and nuts.

3. In a large bowl, sift together the sugar and cocoa. Pour the cheese mixture into the sugar-cocoa mixture, stirring until completely mixed. The candy will be very stiff. I have found it is easier to do the final mixing with my hands.

4. Using your hands, remove the candy from the bowl and press evenly and firmly into the pan. Because of the amount of butter in this recipe (which you must use), I like to pat the top of the candy with a paper towel to remove excess oil. At this point, you may want to refrigerate it until firm, depending on how quickly you want to serve it. Thirty minutes will usually do the trick. Cut into squares.

MAKES ABOUT 36 SQUARES

BUTTER TOFFEE NUTS WITH SEA SALT

Use raw, unsalted nuts in this recipe, since they get plenty of toasting in the skillet.

You can substitute cashews for any nut.

2 cups sugar

6 Tbsp. butter - *unsalted*

1½ cups pecans

1½ cups walnuts

3 1 cup peanuts

1 cup pine nuts

1 Tbsp. flaky sea salt, such as Maldon, plus more to taste

2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

1. Lightly grease a large sheet tray; set aside.

2. In a large, deep skillet, combine ¾ cup water, sugar, and butter and cook over medium-high heat, stirring often, until butter is melted, 3 to 4 minutes. Add pecans, walnuts, peanuts, and pine nuts and cook, stirring gently and frequently, until sugar mixture dries out and begins to look powdery, 12 to 15 minutes. Continue cooking, stirring constantly, until toffee coating is dark golden brown and glossy, about 10 minutes more.

3. Remove skillet from heat and quickly stir in salt and nutmeg. Carefully transfer mixture to prepared sheet tray, spreading it evenly. (Be careful—the mixture is very hot!) Sprinkle with more salt and set aside to cool completely.

MAKES ABOUT 8 CUPS.

Total time: 35 minutes

FORGOTTEN COOKIES

2 egg whites

½ cup Splenda Sugar Blend

1 cup white chocolate chips

Heat oven to 350

Beat whites till stiff, beat in sugar, beat in chips, drop onto greased sheets.

Put in over- turn off oven.

Take out in the morning.