

Vanilla fudge

By Cassie Best

Homemade fudge makes a fabulous parcel wrapped up for any occasion and will keep in a sealed container for up to two months, so this is a great one to send to friends and family through the post.



Prep time: 10 mins

Cook time: 40 mins (plus overnight cooking)

Difficulty: A challenge

Serves: Cuts into 36 pieces

Ingredients

450g golden caster sugar
400g double cream
50g butter
1 tbsp glucose syrup
1 tbsp vanilla bean paste

Method

STEP 1

Line a 20 x 20cm cake tin with baking parchment. Tip the sugar, cream, butter and glucose syrup into a medium to large saucepan. Heat to dissolve the sugar and melt the butter, stirring now and again.

STEP 2

Once dissolved, put a sugar thermometer in the pan, making sure the end is completely covered by the syrup – if not, transfer the mixture to a smaller pan (with enough space for the syrup to bubble up). Increase the heat and bring the syrup to a steady boil. Keep bubbling, stirring occasionally to stop the sugar from catching, until the mixture reaches 116C – this is known as the soft ball stage.

STEP 3

Remove the pan from the heat and leave to sit, undisturbed, for 5 mins, until the temperature drops to 110C. Stir in the vanilla and a good pinch of salt.

STEP 4

Keep the sugar thermometer in the pan and begin beating the mixture with a wooden spoon, quite vigorously, until the temperature cools to about 60C. By this time the fudge will be really thick and will have lost its glossy shine. Remove the thermometer and continue beating for a few mins more. This process is very important when making fudge, as it creates small sugar crystals, which give the fudge its lovely smooth and creamy texture (see 'fudge know-how', below).

STEP 5

Before it sets completely, quickly pour the fudge into your prepared tin and smooth over the surface. Leave to cool at room temperature overnight – don't put the fudge in the fridge as it will become sticky and won't set properly. Cut into bite-sized pieces and pop in a box to give as a present.

Tips:

Sugar crystals - Fudge gets its melt-in-the-mouth consistency from the small sugar crystals that are created by beating the mixture as it cools. If you beat the mixture before it has cooled to 110C, you will encourage larger crystals to form, which can result in a grainy texture.

Temperature - You need to be precise when making sweets and confectionery, so it's worth investing in a sugar thermometer.

Best results - For the best result, beat the mixture until it has almost set, then pour into a tin and smooth over.