

Home on the Range

Stir Up Easter Treats

Easter is coming. That means candy making to fill those Easter baskets for children and gifts for friends.

Many recipes handed down through the generations, request paraffin in the chocolate coating. Paraffin is not approved for human consumption by the FDA. Some people substitute shortening such as Crisco in place of the paraffin. This produces a smooth, glossy coating.

Another way that guarantees perfect results is to purchase chocolate coating wherever candy supplies are sold. There are three ways to heat the coating. Here are some guidelines on the three dif-

ferent methods.

• **Electric fry pan:** Set thermostat between off and warm. Test temperature with hand. If it feels too hot for the hand, it's too hot for coating.

• **Double boiler:** Never put coating directly on a stove burner. Heat water in bottom pan of double boiler; remove pan from stove; place pan with coating over hot water making sure bottom of this pan is not touching the water; stir gently while coating melts. If water needs to be reheated, do not put coating on the stove, while reheating water.

• **Microwave:** Be careful. When melting one pound coating, place

in plastic bowl that does not retain heat in microwave. Heat on medium 50 percent power for 60 seconds; stir; 30 seconds; stir. Continue this until soft lumps remain. Remove from microwave and stir during standing time.

For candies that are coated with coconut, add a colorful touch by tinting the coconut: Combine coconut and a few drops green food coloring in plastic bag. Shake until coconut is evenly coated.

CHIPPER PEANUT CANDY

14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk

1 cup crunchy peanut butter
1 cup butterscotch-flavored morsels

2 cups crushed potato chips
Finely chopped peanuts

In medium saucepan, over medium heat, combine sweetened condensed milk, peanut butter and morsels. Cook and stir until morsels are melted and ingredients are well blended. Remove from heat. Add chips; mix well. Roll into one-inch balls; roll in nuts to coat. Chill at least one hour or until firm. Store in refrigerator.

Flavor improves after 24 hours. They keep well stored, covered, in the refrigerator. Makes about two pounds.

Elisa Ranck

Lancaster Co. Dairy Princess

PEANUT BUTTER EASTER EGGS

Cook 2 medium potatoes, mash while hot and add butter to taste. Add the following:

2-3 pounds confectioners' sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
Pinch salt

Knead mixture together. Roll into small balls. Coat with dark chocolate candy coating.

Elisa Ranck

Lancaster Co. Dairy Princess

EASTER EGGS

1/4 pound butter
3-ounces cream cheese
6-ounce jar peanut butter
1 teaspoon vanilla

Cream the first three ingredients together and add one pound of the confectioners' sugar. Mix well again. Form into the shape of an egg. Let stand in refrigerator overnight until it is firm enough to dip in chocolate coating.

To make buckeyes, form mixture into little balls and dip half way into coating chocolate.

Coating for eggs:

1-2 pounds confectionery chocolate coating

3 tablespoons shortening
The shortening makes the chocolate a little thinner and easier to dip the eggs.

Use a cake decorator to top chocolate egg with a flower made from icing.

Ivamae Love
East Waterford

OPERA FUDGE



Homemade candies are fun and easy to make for Easter. Peanut butter Easter eggs can be a family project for a rainy spring afternoon.

1/2 pound butter
1/2 pound cream cheese
1 teaspoon vanilla

2 pounds confectioners' sugar
Mix together butter and cream cheese until smooth. Add vanilla and sugar; mix well. Refrigerate until ready to handle. Make small balls and coat. Coating: Melt four squares unsweetened chocolate with 2 tablespoons shortening. (Contributor adds 1/4 bar paraffin in place of shortening, but paraffin is not approved by the FDA.)

Michelle McMichael
Berks Co. Dairy Princess

COCONUT CREAM EGGS

2 pounds confectioners' sugar
1/2 pound butter
8-ounces cream cheese
2 teaspoons coconut or vanilla flavoring

1 large can coconut
Mix butter and cream cheese. Add sugar, coconut, and flavoring. Shape mixture into egg shapes. For coating, melt together:

8-ounce bar baking chocolate and 2 tablespoons shortening in place of the paraffin contributor uses.

Michelle McMichael
Berks Co. Dairy Princess

CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

6 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup heavy or whipping cream
1/4 cup light corn syrup
6 squares semisweet chocolate
2 squares unsweetened chocolate
1/2 teaspoon brandy extract
Unsweetened cocoa
Confectioners sugar
Finely chopped nuts

In one-quart saucepan, combine butter, cream and corn syrup. Stirring frequently, bring

to a boil over medium heat. Remove from heat. Add chocolate; stir until completely melted. Stir in extract. Pour into shallow baking pan. Cover; refrigerate about 3 hours or until firm.

Shape heaping teaspoonfuls of chocolate mixture into one-inch balls. Roll in cocoa, confectioners sugar or chopped nuts. Store in tightly covered container in refrigerator. Makes about 4 1/2 dozen truffles.

B.Light
Lebanon

PEANUT BUTTER CUPS

18-ounces peanut butter, smooth or chunky
1/4 pound butter, room temperature

1 pound confectioners' sugar
Mix together peanut butter, butter, and confectionery sugar by hand until smooth. Mixture can be rolled into balls or eggs and dipped in chocolate or used as centers for peanut butter cups.

To make peanut butter cups, fill paper candy cup one-third with melted chocolate; add formed peanut mixture; cover with more melted chocolate. Let set up at room temperature. If mixture is too creamy, add more confectionery sugar; if mixture is too stiff, add more peanut butter.

GOOEY CHOCOLATE PRETZEL BARS

5 tablespoons butter
3 1/2 cups mini pretzels
1 cup raisins
1 1/2 cups semi-sweet baking chips
14-ounces lowfat sweetened condensed milk
1/3 cup coarsely chopped pretzels

Heat oven to 350 degrees. (Turn to Page B8)

Featured Recipe

SAFE AND SIMPLE CHOCOLATE COATING

2 8-ounce milk chocolate bars, broken into pieces
1/4 cup shortening (not butter, margarine or oil)

OR

2 cups milk chocolate chips

2 tablespoons shortening (not butter, margarine, or oil)

Place chocolate and shortening in 4-cup glass measuring cup or 1 1/2 quart glass bowl. Fill another larger glass bowl or large pan with one-inch of very warm tap water.

Place measuring cup or bowl containing the chocolate in the larger bowl or pan so that water covers bottom half of cup or bowl containing the chocolate.

Note: Keep water level low so that water does not get into the chocolate mixture and ruin the coating.

Stir the chocolate constantly with rubber scraper until chocolate is completely melted and mixture is smooth. The process is not difficult, but it does take time. Do not rush. It should take about 20 minutes to melt the chocolate. If the water begins to cool, pour it out and add more warm water. Be careful not to get any water into the chocolate mixture. Remove the measuring cup or bowl containing the melted chocolate mixture from the water.

Dip chilled centers completely into chocolate mixture, one at a time, with a fork.

Gently tap fork on side of cup or bowl to remove excess chocolate. Invert coated center onto wax paper-covered tray or cookie sheet; decorate top of coated center with small amount of melted chocolate, using tip of fork.

Store coated centers, loosely covered, in a cool, dry place. Enough coating for five dozen centers.

Note: If chocolate becomes too thick while coating, return measuring cup or bowl containing the chocolate to larger glass bowl or large pan filled with one-inch of very warm tap water. Stir mixture constantly until desired consistency. Be careful not to get any water into the chocolate mixture. When mixture reaches desired consistency, remove from water and continue dipping the centers.

EASY BUTTERCREAM CENTERS

3-ounce package cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup butter, softened
4 cup unsifted confectioners' sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Beat cream cheese and butter in large mixer bowl until smooth.

Blend in confectioners' sugar and vanilla. If necessary, chill about one hour or until mixture is firm enough to handle.

Shape into one-inch balls; place on wax paper-covered tray or cookie sheet.

Cover loosely; chill 3 to 4 hours or overnight. Centers should feel dry to touch before coating.

Coat centers as directed. About five dozen centers.

Variations: Divide mixture into three parts. Add any of the following flavor variations to thirds of the mixture as desired:

2/3 cup flaked coconut
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1/2 teaspoon strawberry extract plus three drops red food coloring
1/4 teaspoon rum or orange extract
1/4 teaspoon mint extract plus three cups green food coloring

Chocolate Variation: Blend in 1/3 cup cocoa with confectioners' sugar and vanilla into above mixture. Add one to two teaspoons milk until mixture holds together.