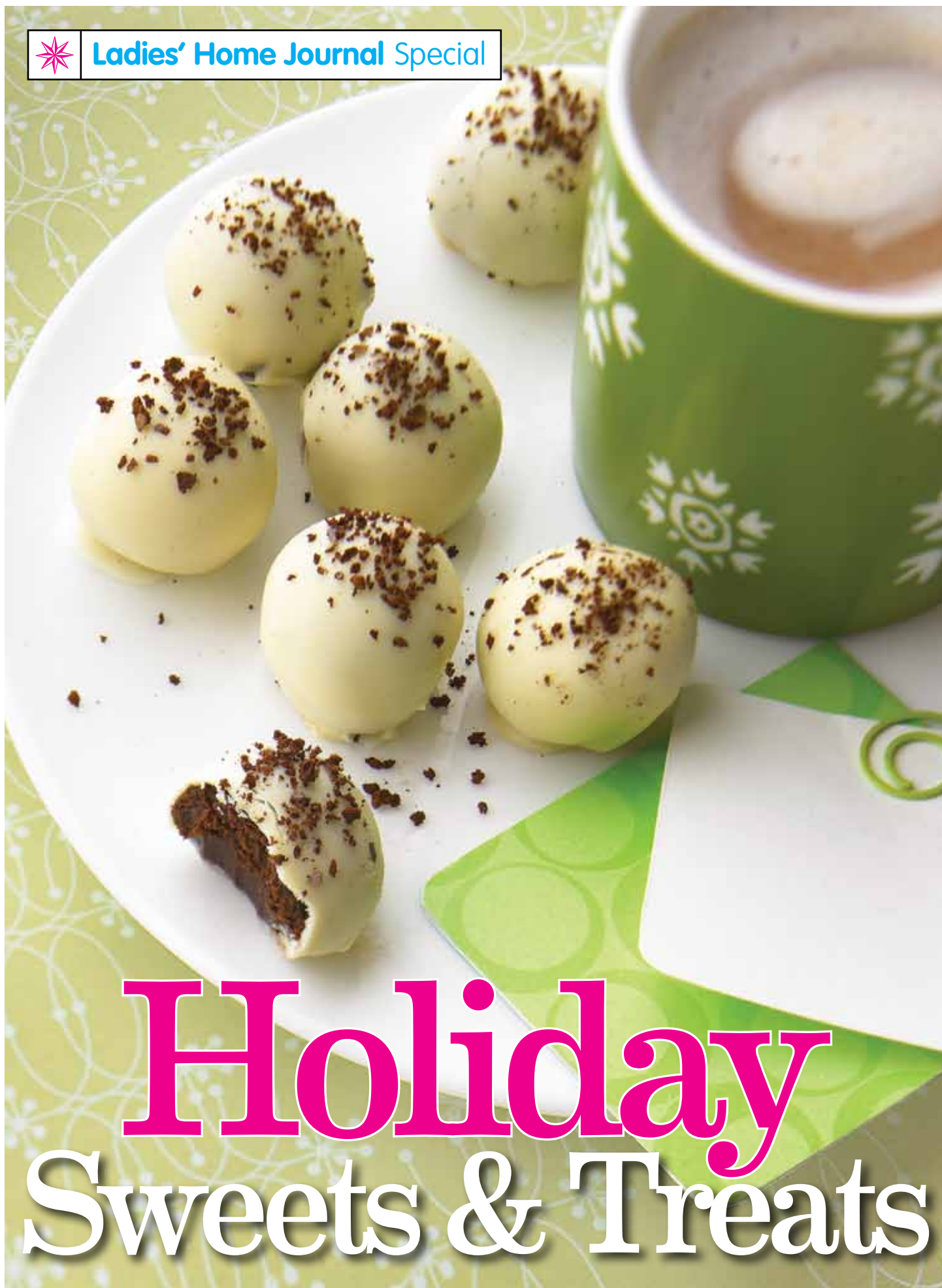




Ladies' Home Journal Special



Holiday Sweets & Treats



Candied Candy Canes

Dip a classic Christmas sweet into white chocolate—doubly delicious!



Work / 25 min Total / 25 min

- 1 cup white or semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 tsp shortening
- 12 candy canes, about 5½ inches long
- Red sanding sugar, nonpareils and jimmies

1. Combine white or chocolate chips and shortening in a small saucepan; stir over low heat until melted. (Or combine chips and shortening in a microwave-safe bowl; microwave on 70 percent power for 1 to 2 min or until pieces are melted, stirring every 30 sec.)
2. Transfer mixture to a 1-cup glass liquid measure. Dip the bottom or top half of each candy cane into the melted chocolate. Immediately sprinkle with or roll in sanding sugar, nonpareils or jimmies. Place on a baking sheet lined with waxed paper. Let stand for at least 1 hr or until chocolate is firm.

Makes 12

10 Things To Do With Candy Canes

PUT CANDY CANES IN A ZIP-TOP BAG AND CRUSH WITH A MEAT Mallet OR USE A FOOD PROCESSOR.

- 1 Stir 1 tbsp crushed candy canes into one serving of prepared hot cocoa.
- 2 Fold ½ cup crushed candy canes into the marshmallow mixture when making crispy rice treats.
- 3 Sprinkle crushed candy canes over frosted cookies.
- 4 Sprinkle crushed candy canes over chocolate- or vanilla-frosted cake.
- 5 Stir ½ cup crushed candy canes into 1 container vanilla frosting and use as a filling for sandwich cookies.
- 6 Fold ¾ cup crushed candy canes into 3 pints softened vanilla ice cream. Smooth into a 9-inch cookie-crust pie shell and drizzle with fudge topping; freeze overnight before serving.
- 7 Fold ½ cup crushed candy canes into 2 cups whipped cream and use to fill cream puffs.
- 8 Knead ½ cup crushed candy canes into a roll of refrigerated cookie dough before baking as directed.
- 9 Dip large marshmallows into a bowl of melted chocolate and sprinkle with crushed candy canes.
- 10 Replace almonds with the same amount of crushed candy canes in biscotti.



Snowy White Truffles

Look for cream of coconut in the Latin foods section of your grocery store.



Work / 1 hr Total / 3 hr 30 min

- 4 6-oz pkgs white chocolate baking squares or white chocolate bars, chopped
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup cream of coconut
- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp white crème de cacao
- 2 tbsp shortening
- 3 1/2 cups shredded sweetened coconut

1. For filling, place half of the chopped white chocolate in a food processor. Process until finely chopped. In a small saucepan, stir together the heavy cream, cream of coconut and butter over low heat until hot but not boiling. With the food processor running, carefully pour the hot mixture through the feed tube into the chocolate. Process until smooth. Stir in crème de cacao. Transfer white-chocolate mixture to a medium bowl; cover and chill until firm, about 3 hr. Shape filling into 3/4-inch balls and freeze for 15 min.
2. Combine the remaining white chocolate and the shortening in a bowl set over a saucepan of gently simmering water. (Make sure that the bowl doesn't touch the water.) Stir constantly with a rubber spatula until chocolate is completely melted and smooth.
3. Use a fork to dip frozen balls into melted white chocolate, allowing excess to drip back into the bowl. Roll balls in coconut. Place truffles on a prepared baking sheet. Chill until set, about 10 min. To store, place truffles in layers separated by waxed paper in an airtight container. Refrigerate for up to 2 weeks or freeze for up to 3 months. Bring to room temperature before serving.

Makes about 60



Candy-Box Caramels

For variety, drizzle caramels with more than one color of melted candy coating.

Work / 40 min Total / 1 hr 30 min

- 12 oz chocolate- and/or vanilla-flavor candy coating, coarsely chopped
- Toffee pieces, crushed and finely chopped
- Pistachios, finely chopped
- Nonpareils
- 1 14-oz pkg vanilla caramels (about 48), unwrapped

1. Place candy coating in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high for 3 min or just until melted, stirring every 30 sec.
2. Place toffee pieces, pistachios and nonpareils in shallow dishes. Insert a skewer into each caramel. Dip one caramel into melted coating; allow excess coating to drip off. Place dipped caramel in toffee, pistachios and/or nonpareils. Place coated caramel on a baking sheet lined with waxed paper. Repeat with remaining caramels. Let stand 1 hr or until coating sets.
3. Layer caramels between waxed paper in an airtight container; cover. Store at room temperature for up to 1 week or freeze for up to 3 months.

Makes 48



Mixed-Nut Brittle

You can caramelize sugar in your microwave for this easy recipe.



5 Options For Nut Brittle

* While brittle is still warm, sprinkle surface with chocolate chips. Let stand 5 minutes, allowing the chips to melt. Use a knife or back of a spoon to spread chocolate evenly.

* Use roasted cashews in place of peanuts.

* Use macadamia nuts in place of peanuts; stir in toasted coconut at the end of cooking before transferring to baking sheet.

* Use blanched almonds in place of peanuts and almond extract in place of vanilla.

* Substitute slivered almonds for half of the peanuts and toasted pumpkin seeds for the other half.

Work / 15 min Total / 15 min

½ cup sugar
½ cup light corn syrup
½ cup salted mixed nuts or peanuts
1 tbsp butter
½ tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp baking soda

1. Grease a small baking sheet; set aside. In a glass microwave-safe bowl (one that is free from cracks and chips, which can cause it to shatter), combine sugar and corn syrup. Microwave mixture on high, uncovered, for 5 min, stirring twice.
2. Stir in nuts and butter. Microwave on high until mixture turns golden, 1 to 2 min. Stir in vanilla and baking soda. Immediately pour

mixture onto baking sheet. Use two forks to lift and pull candy into a thin sheet as it cools.
3. Cool brittle completely. Break into irregular pieces. To store, layer pieces between waxed paper in an airtight container; cover. Keep at room temperature for up to 1 week.

Makes about ½ lb



Peanut Butter Popcorn Balls

Making popcorn balls is a rite of childhood. Here's an easy recipe to share the fun with your youngest generation of cooks.



Work / 15 min Total / 15 min

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup reduced-fat or regular peanut butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup caramel syrup
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup semisweet chocolate chips
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped peanuts
4 cups prepared plain popcorn

1. In a small bowl, combine peanut butter and caramel syrup. Fold in chocolate chips and chopped peanuts.
2. Place popcorn in large bowl. Pour caramel mixture over top; mix with hands (mixture will be sticky).
3. Using plastic wrap to prevent sticking, press about 2 tbsp of the popcorn mixture into a 2-inch ball. Transfer to waxed paper. Continue with remaining mixture. Refrigerate if desired.

Makes about 2 dozen

5 Tasty Additions To Caramel Popcorn

- * Think beyond peanuts. Stir in cashews, shelled sunflower seeds or pistachios.
- * Stir in dried apples and a dash of apple pie spice or cinnamon during the last 5 minutes of baking.
- * Replace $\frac{1}{4}$ of the popcorn with small twisted pretzels for a sweet and salty treat.
- * Stir in 1 handful of dried cranberries or cherries while your caramel corn is still warm.
- * Replace half of the corn syrup with molasses for a richer-flavored caramel corn.



Chocolate Rum Fudge

A creamy, nutty texture makes this fudge absolutely heavenly! If you like, stir in your favorite flavoring as a substitute for the rum.

Work / 20 min Total / 50 min

2 tbsp butter, plus more for pan
2 cups sugar
¾ cup half-and-half or light cream
2 oz chocolate, chopped
1 tsp light corn syrup
⅛ tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla extract
¼ tsp rum
½ cup chopped toasted pecans

1. Line a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan with foil, extending foil over edges of pan. Butter foil; set loaf pan aside.

2. Butter sides of a heavy 2-qt saucepan. Add sugar, half-and-half, chocolate, corn syrup and salt in the saucepan and cook over medium-high heat, stirring, until mixture boils. Reduce heat to medium low and continue cooking until mixture reaches the soft-ball stage (236°F

on a candy thermometer). Remove from heat.

3. Add 2 tbsp butter, vanilla and rum. Do not stir. Cool until 110°F, about 1 hr.

4. Stir in pecans. Beat vigorously with a wooden spoon until fudge becomes very thick and just starts to lose its gloss, about 5 min.

5. Immediately spread fudge evenly in prepared pan. Score fudge into squares while warm. When fudge is firm, use foil to lift out of pan. Cut fudge into squares. To store, place candy in layers separated by pieces of waxed paper in an airtight container; cover. Store at room temperature for up to 1 week or freeze for up to 3 months. Let stand for 30 min before serving.

Makes 1 lb or about 30 pieces



Handmade Marshmallows

You'll never want to buy packaged marshmallows again after you've made them from scratch.

Work / 55 min Total / 1 hr 55 min

2 envelopes plus 1 tsp unflavored gelatin
1¼ cups granulated sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
2 tsp vanilla extract
Confectioners' sugar

1. In a small bowl, sprinkle gelatin over ⅓ cup cold water. Let stand for 10 min.

2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine granulated sugar and another ⅓ cup water. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Reduce heat; simmer for 5 min.

3. Pour sugar mixture into the bowl of an electric stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Add gelatin mixture and corn syrup. Beat on low speed until gelatin is dissolved, 1 min. Beat at medium speed until soft peaks form, 30 min. Beat in vanilla.

4. Dot corners of a 9-by-9-inch baking pan with small

amounts of marshmallow to hold waxed paper in place.

Line the pan with waxed paper, extending the paper over the edges of the pan. Spread remaining sugar mixture into prepared pan.

Sprinkle lightly with confectioners' sugar. Let stand for 1 hr or until firm.

5. Lift edges of the waxed paper to remove marshmallow from pan. Using a damp, warm knife, cut the block into 64 pieces, rinsing the knife with warm water after each cut.

6. Dust cut edges of marshmallows with confectioners' sugar. Package in gift bags or store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.

Makes 64





Fabulous Five-Minute Fudge

Melt and stir. It's that easy when you use your microwave oven to make this ultra-rich classic.

Work / **5 min** Total / **35 min**

- 1 12-oz pkg semisweet chocolate chips
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sweetened condensed milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

1. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper; set aside.
2. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, combine chocolate chips, sweetened condensed milk and 1 tbsp water. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 1 min; stir. Microwave until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth, about 1 min more, stirring halfway through. Stir in nuts and vanilla. Pour mixture onto prepared baking sheet and spread into a 9-by-6-inch rectangle.
3. Chill fudge about 30 min or until firm. Cut into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch squares. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.

Makes 24 pieces



Easy White Fudge

If you're allergic to or simply don't like nuts, feel free to omit them.

Work / **20 min** Total / **2 hr 20 min**

- 3 cups white chocolate baking chips
- 1 14-oz can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup chopped almonds, macadamia nuts or pecans, plus more for topping
- 2 tsp orange zest
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

1. Line an 8-by-8-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges of pan. Butter foil; set aside.
2. In a 2-qt heavy saucepan, cook and stir white chocolate and sweetened condensed milk over low heat until pieces melt and mixture is smooth. Remove saucepan from heat. Stir in nuts, orange zest and vanilla.
3. Spread fudge evenly in the prepared pan. If desired, sprinkle with additional nuts; press in lightly. Score into 1-inch pieces. Cover and chill about 2 hr or until firm.
4. When fudge is firm, use foil to lift it out of pan. Cut fudge into pieces. Store tightly covered for up to 1 week.

Chocolate Variation: Prepare as above, substituting 3 cups semisweet chocolate chips for the white baking pieces. If desired, omit orange zest.

Makes 2 lbs or about 64 pieces

8 Mix-Ins For Homemade Fudge

- 1 Use toasted coconut in place of the nuts and coconut extract in place of the vanilla.
- 2 Stir 1 cup crushed chocolate sandwich cookies into fudge in place of the nuts.
- 3 Swirl $\frac{1}{4}$ cup peanut butter into fudge just before transferring to pan; garnish with chopped peanuts.
- 4 Add 2 tbsp espresso powder to the milk when making fudge.
- 5 Gently fold in 1 cup chocolate chips, stirring just enough to marble, before transferring cooked fudge to pan.
- 6 Stir 1 cup chopped candy bars into fudge before transferring to pan.
- 7 Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cut-up miniature marshmallows with the nuts.
- 8 Stir 2 tsp finely shredded lime peel and 1 cup chopped roasted macadamia nuts into your favorite white fudge recipe.



Cran-Crackle Bars

This salty-sweet bar gets its crunch and flavor from a brittlelike topping and pretzel crust.



Work / 20 min Total / 50 min

- 6 cups tiny pretzel twists
- 2 tbsp packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup butter, melted, plus ⅓ cup unmelted
- 1½ cups dried cranberries
- 1½ cups lightly salted mixed nuts
- 1 cup white baking pieces or semisweet chocolate pieces
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup light corn syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp baking soda

1. Heat oven to 325°F. Lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch baking pan; set aside.
2. Combine pretzels, brown sugar and ½ cup melted butter in a food processor. Cover and process until mixture resembles fine crumbs, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Press crumb mixture into bottom of prepared baking pan. Bake for 10 min. Sprinkle cranberries, nuts and baking chips evenly over crust.
3. Combine granulated sugar, ⅓ cup butter and corn syrup in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly, 10 min. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla and baking soda. Pour syrup mixture evenly over cranberry-nut layer.
4. Bake until mixture is bubbly on the surface, 20 to 25 min. Cool completely in pan on a wire rack. Cut into bars. To store, place bars in a single layer in an airtight container and cover. Store at room temperature for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 1 month. Thaw bars, if frozen, before serving.

Makes 24



Mocha Truffles

To make candies of equal size, shape the truffles using a small cookie scoop.

Work / 45 min Total / 4 hr 15 min

- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 2 tbsp butter
- 14 oz premium dark baking chocolate, chopped
- 1 tbsp coffee liqueur
- 15 oz premium white baking chocolate, chopped
- 1 tbsp shortening
- 1 tbsp instant-coffee crystals

1. Add heavy cream and butter to a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat. Remove from heat and add dark chocolate. Do not stir. Cover and let stand 5 min. Stir until smooth. Stir in liqueur. Cover and chill in the refrigerator until almost firm, stirring once or twice, about 2 hr.
2. Drop mixture in 1-inch mounds on prepared baking sheet with a 1-inch scoop or rounded measuring spoon. Chill in the refrigerator about 1 hr or until firm.
3. Roll scoops into 1-inch balls;

transfer to a baking sheet lined with waxed paper. Cover and freeze for 30 min.

4. Microwave white chocolate and shortening in a large microwave-safe bowl on 50 percent power until mixture is melted and smooth, stirring twice, about 2 min. Let mixture cool slightly.
5. Using a fork, dip truffles, one at a time, into melted chocolate, allowing the excess to drip back into bowl. Place on a clean baking sheet lined with waxed paper. Sprinkle with coffee crystals while chocolate is still wet. Chill 30 min or until set. Store in a single layer in an airtight container; cover. Refrigerate for up to 2 weeks or freeze for up to 1 month. Let stand for 30 min before serving.

Makes about 48



Chocolate And Candy-Cane Bark

Work quickly when making this candy-shop favorite or the white chocolate will set before you swirl in the milk chocolate.

Work / 20 min Total / 50 min

6 oz vanilla-flavor candy coating, chopped
3 oz white chocolate baking squares, chopped
6 oz chocolate-flavor candy coating, chopped
1 3-oz bar milk chocolate, chopped
¼ cup crushed candy canes

1. Line a baking sheet with foil, extending foil over edges of pan; set aside. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, combine vanilla candy coating and white chocolate. Microwave, uncovered, on high, 2 to 3 min, stirring once halfway through cooking time. Stir until smooth. Pour onto baking sheet and spread into a 10-by-8-inch rectangle; set aside.
2. In another medium microwave-safe bowl, combine chocolate-flavor candy coating and milk chocolate. Microwave, uncovered, on high, 2 to 3 min, stirring once halfway through cooking time. Stir until smooth.
3. Slowly pour chocolate mixture over white mixture on baking sheet. Use a thin spatula to swirl chocolate into white mixture. Shake baking sheet gently for even thickness.
4. Sprinkle with crushed candy canes. Chill until firm, about 30 min. Use foil to lift candy from baking sheet; break candy into pieces. To store, layer pieces between waxed paper in airtight container; cover. Keep in refrigerator up to 10 days. Serve at room temperature.

Makes 1¼ lbs or about 20 pieces



Get candy coating at wilton.com.

9 More Delicious Chocolate Bark Toppings

Smoked almonds

Crushed butter mints

Crisp-cooked bacon
(store in the refrigerator)

Chopped dried apricots

Honey-roasted cashews

Chopped malted milk balls

Finely crushed lemon drops
(on white-chocolate bark)

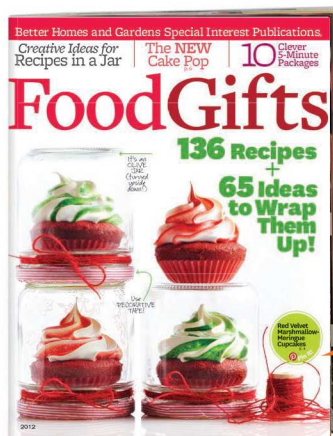
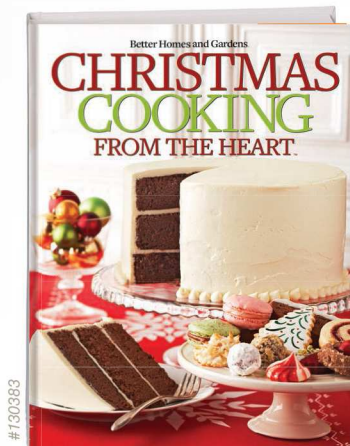
Toasted pecans and coconut

Toffee pieces

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