



# FOR THE LOVE OF CHOCOLATE

Part 2 of 2

Create fudge at home with these tips  
and shortcuts from a candy-making pro

BY WANDA A. ADAMS  
Advertiser Food Editor

Joyce Gepitulan has a job many would envy: She develops new products for Hawaiian Host and every day is surrounded by the alluring scents of roasting macadamia nuts and melting chocolate.

Asked if she ever gets tired of chocolate, she looks puzzled. "Noooooo," she says with a question in her tone — as if to wonder, "How could you ever get tired of chocolate?"

Gepitulan, a youthful-looking 33, giggles when she reveals that she eats her breakfast oatmeal at work each morning so she can put a little chopped chocolate into it.

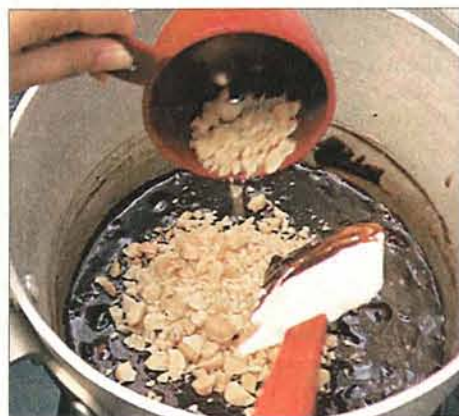
Though she isn't a confectioner (a candy chef), Gepitulan, who has been with Hawaiian Host for 10 years, does have a bachelor of science degree in food science and nutrition from the University of Hawai'i, and it is this understanding of the chemical processes that accompany candy-making that allow her to "play safely" with recipes.

The product development department's goal is to come up with at least two new po-

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To make fudge, Hawaiian Host chocolate-covered macadamia nut candy and Kona Caramacs are melted in scalded cream.



Plain macadamia nuts are added and the mixture is then cooled and folded together.



The quick fudge is poured into a pan lined with plastic wrap and refrigerated at least an hour before cutting into 1-inch squares.

Joyce Gepitulan, products innovation technician at Hawaiian Host, chops chocolate-covered macadamia nut candy to use in the fudge recipe on Page E4.

Photos by DEBORAH BOOKER | The Honolulu Advertiser



## THE ADVERTISER'S VIDEO REPORTS

See video of Joyce Gepitulan preparing a super-simple mac-nut pie, at [HONOLULUADVERTISER.COM/ISLANDLIFE](http://HONOLULUADVERTISER.COM/ISLANDLIFE)



# Candy

CONTINUED FROM E3

tential products a quarter, which translates to a lot of thinking, dreaming, tasting and testing, plus problem-solving technical issues.

Sara Muraoka, Hawaiian Host director of marketing, said the company closely tracks trends — changes in candy lovers' tastes, as well as product ideas and packaging.

The trends now: High cocoa-content chocolate, more dark chocolate (once 10 percent of the American market; now as high as 40 percent), single-origin chocolates (like estate wines, traceable to a single grower or region and therefore exhibiting particular characteristics), organically grown cacao and a sense of self-indulgence.

In addition, since theirs is a market strongly driven by visitors, Hawaiian Host takes note of that group's tendency to pick up trial-size samples first, on impulse, then to come back and buy larger packages for gifts.

Gepitulan nods when an interviewer mentions that many home cooks are nervous about candy-making, or have had bad experiences. Fudge that gets grainy. Candy that won't set.

Candy, she says, is very temperamental and particularly sensitive to temperature and moisture.

Unfortunately for Island candy-makers, hot and humid conditions are the worst for candy-making.

But the problem goes further.

## TIPS FROM THE PRO: CANDY-MAKING

Cool, dry conditions aid in candy-making; avoid hot, humid days; work in air conditioning, or at least in the early morning.

**To melt chocolate:** Microwave 1 minute (50 percent power); stir; continue in 30-second intervals, stirring between.

Grainy fudge is caused by insufficient milk fat, incorrect beating technique, too-high temperatures.

**Toasting nuts:** Spread on cookie sheet, roast at 300 de-

Fudge and its many cousins — perhaps the most popular holiday candies — require a vigorous beating with a wooden spoon in order to achieve the desired, creamy smooth texture.

The key is to cool the chocolate sufficiently to keep large crystals from forming, then to mix properly to spread the small crystals through the mixture, so the fudge will "set" and cut properly.

Professional confectioners use a technique called "slabbing," in which the candy is poured out onto a marble slab (which, of course, is very cold) in a loose rectangle, then rapidly folded from the edges inward in a repetitive motion. This works well, and is quick, but is a little beyond the skills of most home cooks.

Corn syrup, evaporated milk, marshmallow "creme" and other ingredients are sometimes used to help prevent crystallization.

The candy trivia for the day

gress until fragrant, golden — 15 to 30 minutes.

That white "bloom" on chocolate is harmless; temperature fluctuations cause butter fat to come to surface of chocolate.

**Home "tempering" (for a chocolate coating that doesn't readily melt):** Melt 1 pound chocolate in microwave; cool chocolate to 115 degrees; add ¼ to ½ pound chopped chocolate; scrape and fold (do NOT beat) mixture until shiny, smooth and a little softer than frosting. Dip truffles, dried fruit, etc. in tempered chocolate.

in Gepitulan's kitchen (which she not-so-jokingly refers to as her "office") was this: Fudge is actually a form of caramel, a mixture of sugar, butter and milk or cream. Chocolate is merely a flavor of fudge. There's also penuche (brown sugar fudge), maple (made with maple syrup), butterscotch (dark corn syrup), coconut and even coffee fudge.

The beauty of Gepitulan's shortcut fudge recipe (see recipe above) is that because it's made with prepared candy, you don't need to go through all the measured and elaborate steps required for from-scratch fudge-making.

But if you're up for that, here are her suggestions for success:

- Work in as cool and dry an environment as possible. Start your candy-making in the dark of dawn. Crank up the A/C, if you have it.

- Invest in a candy thermometer (for measuring higher temperatures) and an instant-read thermometer (for quick readings

of lower temperatures).

- Work from a reliable recipe; a lot of candy-making success has to do with the specific ingredients and their relative proportions. Measure carefully.

- Cook fudge in a large, heavy-bottomed nonreactive pot.

- Cook the caramel first, by stirring together the sugars and milk or cream; bring to a simmer for one minute. Add chocolate; cover and DO NOT STIR. Stirring at this phase encourages premature crystallization, which causes graininess. Cover and cook 1 minute, then uncover and cook to soft-ball stage (238 to 240 degrees). Remove from heat, add butter and liquid flavorings, again without stirring, and allow to cool to 110 degrees.

- You may place the fudge mixture in a cool water bath to slowly bring down temperature. Half-fill a large bowl with cool water and ice cubes. Place pan in bowl. Do not stir. Take temperature periodically.

- Once chocolate is added, keep water away from mixture or it will "seize," suddenly grow stiff and grainy. If that happens, the fudge is ruined. Even a single drop of condensation from a pan lid or your fingers can cause this to happen.

- When mixture has reached 110 degrees, use a wooden spoon to beat the fudge vigorously (this is hard work), working just until chocolate loses its sheen. As soon as that happens, add remaining flavorings, such as nuts. Spread in buttered pan. Gepitulan likes to line the pan with plastic wrap for ease in turning out the fudge. Allow to cool, cover and refrigerate overnight.

# Start with local sweets for these treats

Desserts can easily be made at home with prepared confections

BY WANDA A. ADAMS  
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For The Advertiser, Joyce Gepitulan came up with a pair of super-simple recipes that leave the candy-making largely to the professionals. Both her caramel fudge and her mac-nut pie begin with prepared confections.

This fudge is made from chocolate-covered caramels, chocolate-covered macadamia nuts, and more macadamia nuts, with just the addition of some cream to encourage melting and proper crystallization.

## 80TH ANNIVERSARY HAWAIIAN HOST KONA CARAMAC FUDGE

2 boxes (5 ounces each) Hawaiian Host Kona Caramacs

1 box (8 ounces each) Hawaiian Host Chocolate Covered Macadamia Nuts

1 cup roasted macadamia nuts or Hawaiian Host lightly salted macadamia nuts

½ cup whipping cream

Prepare a water bath: place ice cubes in a large bowl of cool water. Set aside.

Chop Kona Caramacs and Chocolate-Covered Macadamia Nuts into smaller chunks. Coarsely chop macadamia nuts.

In a medium saucepan, bring whipping cream to scalding temperature (not boiling); look for the milk to form a skin and change surface texture, noticeable when you tip the pan. This takes just a few minutes.

Add candies and mix to melt. Continuing to stir, add nuts.

When temperature is about 160 degrees, remove pan from heat and transfer chocolate mixture to a clean bowl.

Place bowl in water bath and



Photos by **DEBORAH BOOKER** | The Honolulu Advertiser

Make this pie with Hawaiian Host Honey Glazed Macadamia Nuts.



This fudge uses Hawaiian Host Chocolate Covered Macadamia Nuts.

leave undisturbed for about 2 to 3 minutes or until temperature is about 130 degrees.

Using a firm plastic or silicon

spatula, scrape from outside in, folding and mixing chocolate into center. Do not stir in a circular motion, to avoid incorpo-

rating air.

Transfer mixture to a pan lined with buttered plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Cut and serve.

Makes 36 pieces, 18 servings.

• **Per serving:** 120 calories, 9 g fat, 10 mg cholesterol, 10 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein

Similar to a pecan pie, though more dense and less sweet, this macadamia nut pie goes together in just minutes. Gepitulan reduced the sugar because she used honey-glazed nuts; if using regular nuts, use 1 cup sugar. You can make a homemade graham cracker crust, if you like, or use a standard pie crust.

## 80TH ANNIVERSARY HAWAIIAN HOST HONEY GLAZED MACADAMIA NUT PIE

1 (11-ounce) bag Hawaiian Host Honey Glazed Macadamia Nuts

½ cup granulated sugar

3 large eggs

3 tablespoons melted butter

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 (9-inch) deep dish graham cracker crumb crust

Preheat oven to 325 degrees (place rack in center of the oven).

Coarsely chop Hawaiian Host Honey Glazed Macadamia Nuts and pour into pie crust.

In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together eggs, sugar, butter and vanilla. Pour mixture over nuts in pie crust. Bake at 325 degrees until center slightly puffs, about 50 to 55 minutes.

Tips: Refrigerate to make a perfectly cut pie. Let stand for about 2 hours before serving. Serve with vanilla ice cream if desired.

Makes 8 servings.

• **Per serving:** 480 calories, 31 g fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 40 g carbohydrate, 5 g protein