



## Pecan Pralines

Candied nuts have been around for ages, but the praline is generally considered to hail from France. French settlers brought the original recipe—which consisted of individual almonds coated in caramelized sugar—to Louisiana, where chefs substituted locally abundant pecans for the almonds and added cream to make what is now known throughout the South as pecan pralines.

There are as many different ways to make pecan pralines as there are ways to pronounce them. Some traditional recipes call for evaporated milk, while others use cream, regular milk or even buttermilk. Some people prefer chopped pecans instead of pecan halves, and some like to lightly toast the nuts first. You can make them with or without vanilla, or add your favorite liqueur. Keep in mind that these are candy, not cookies, and they are very sweet. The good news is that pecans are loaded with nutritional value, so enjoy! Do you have a favorite recipe for, or a favorite memory of, pecan pralines?

- **Yield:** Makes about 2 dozen.

*Cooking Tips: Wear long sleeves to protect your arms from stray candy bubbles. Sugar burns are painful, so take care, especially with children around. It's better to start on a moderate heat setting and raise the temperature slowly than to cook the candy too hot, too fast. If a hot drop lands on your arm, rinse it off immediately and rub the spot with an ice cube to prevent a burn. I highly recommend using a candy thermometer, preferably digital, to carefully monitor the temperature during the cooking process. Traditional Southern recipes say never make these on a rainy day!*

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/4 cup white sugar
- 3/4 cup brown sugar, packed
- 2 cups pecan halves
- 3/4 cup light cream
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- Pinch of salt (optional, omit if using salted butter)
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon brandy or vanilla (optional)

### METHOD

**1** This is an optional step. Preheat oven to 300 F. Place pecan halves on a baking sheet in a single layer and toast for 10 minutes, turning once. Let cool.

**2** Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside. Mix together white and brown sugar and baking soda in a 3-quart saucepan. Stir in light cream and place over

medium to medium-high heat. Cook, whisking occasionally, until mixture reaches 235°F on a candy thermometer (about 25 minutes). Slight foaming and occasional bubbling in the mixture (it looks like it's gasping) are normal at this stage.

**3** As soon as the temperature reaches 235 F, add the butter and stir until the butter is fully melted and the mixture is well combined (about 1 minute).

**4** Remove the mixture from the heat and stir in the brandy and pecans until well coated. Continue stirring to cool slightly (about 1-2 minutes). Quickly drop by spoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets. Let cool completely.

Store in an airtight container for up to 3-5 days.

Author: Unknown