



How Chocolaty and Rich Could Chocolate Get?

Variations of Fudge Take the Sweet Treat to New Heights

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February is a chocolate-coated month. The candy aisles are overflowing with kisses wrapped in red tin foil and plump chocolate marshmallow hearts in crinkly cellophane. The haute chocolatiers offer all kinds of chocolate finery from truffles to bon bons, tastefully presented in delicate tissue paper and tied up in a pretty bow. In between the purchased nibbles and bites, whip up a batch of delicious and unfussy fudge this February.

It was invented in Baltimore in 1886. Fudge is believed to be a "fudged" attempt at making caramel. Fudge is sweet, rich, and very versatile (kind of like the perfect mate). It can be made with white, milk or dark chocolate and its flavor can mimic your favorite candy bar or a well-loved dessert. It is a fun kitchen activity to do with kids that takes about five minutes to make, and needs an hour or two to firm into its smooth texture in the fridge. Cut the sheet of fudge into bite-sized cubes and wrap individually in wax paper to hand out as sweet treats. Or leave whole and pass around with a knife for dessert. Wrapped in seasonal motifs or simply unadorned, fudge is just the right homemade treat to celebrate the chocolate season with.

Vegan Almond Joy Fudge

3 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
 1 14-ounce can coconut milk, well shaken
 4 tablespoons margarine or Olivio coconut spread
 1 cup roasted almonds, coarsely chopped
 1½ cups sweetened flaked almonds

Grease an 8 x 8 casserole pan, set aside.

In a large microwave safe bowl mix together chocolate chips, coconut milk, and margarine/coconut spread

Microwave in 1-minute increments stirring after each minute for 2-3 minutes.

Mix in chopped almonds and 1 cup of shredded coconut.

Spread out evenly in prepared pan, and sprinkle on top with remaining coconut. Refrigerate for 2 hours until firm. (Note: if fudge is still too soft to cut place in freezer for an hour or so)

Birthday Cake Fudge

1 8oz. package cream cheese, room temperature
 1 package yellow cake mix
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 4 tablespoons butter, room temperature
 1 package (2 cups) white chocolate chips
 ¾ cup + ¼ cup multi-colored sprinkles

Grease an 8 x 8 pan, set aside.

In a large bowl mix together cream cheese, cake mix, vanilla extract and butter until well incorporated.

Meanwhile, in microwave, melt white chocolate chips.

Combine melted chips with cream cheese birthday cake mixture. Add ¾ cup colored sprinkles.

Spread fudge out evenly in pan and top with additional sprinkles. Let set in fridge for approximately 2 hours or until set.

Classic Chocolate Fudge

3 cups chocolate chips
 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
 ¼ cup butter

Prepare an 8 x 8 casserole pan.

Combine all the ingredients in a large microwave-safe bowl.

Microwave in 1-minute increments stirring after each minute for 2 to 3 minutes.

Add your mix-in of choice, if desired (1 to 1 ½ cups usually is a good mix-in ratio to the fudge base)

Smooth out in pan, and top with additional goodies, if desired. Allow to set for an hour or two in fridge

Suggested Mix-Ins and Toppings

Mini chocolate chips
 Peanut butter chips
 Chopped nuts
 Toffee bits
 Cookie crumbs
 Rice Krispies or other favorite breakfast cereals

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