

Chocolate barks

Barks are among the easiest confections you can make. Just exercise a little care in melting the chocolate, and you'll be rewarded with beautiful candy that's perfect for gift-giving—or snacking.

Cranberry-Pistachio Bark

PREP TIME: About 30 minutes, plus at least 4 hours to set

NOTES: Read about melting chocolate in "Candy Basics" (page 69) before making this bark. The setting time for the bark varies greatly according to the temperature of your home. Although we preferred the texture of the bark set at room temperature, you can set bark in the refrigerator if necessary.

MAKES: About 3¾ pounds

1. Line a 12- by 15-inch baking sheet with cooking parchment; butter parchment. Chop 2 pounds **white chocolate** and place with 1 tablespoon **solid vegetable shortening** in a heatproof bowl that will nest in a 3- to 4-quart pan. Heat 1 inch of water in the pan just until steaming. Remove from heat and place bowl over water (bowl shouldn't touch water). Stir occasionally just until mixture is melted and smooth. Remove bowl from over pan.

2. Stir in 2 cups *each* **shelled unsalted raw pistachios** and **dried cranberries**. Using a flexible spatula, scrape mixture onto buttered parchment and spread ¾ to ½ inch thick (mixture should almost cover sheet). Sprinkle with 1 more cup *each* pistachios and dried cranberries; gently press into white chocolate.

3. Let stand at cool room temperature (see notes) until completely firm, 4 to 6 hours, or overnight. Break or cut bark into pieces. Store airtight in a cool place up to 1 month.

Per ounce: 141 cal., 48% (68 cal.) from fat; 1.3 g protein; 7.5 g fat (4.2 g sat.); 16 g carbo (1 g fiber); 22 mg sodium; 0.2 mg chol.

Rocky Road Bark

PREP TIME: About 30 minutes, plus at least 4 hours to set

NOTES: See notes for cranberry-pistachio bark, preceding.

MAKES: About 3 pounds

1. Follow step 1 of cranberry-pistachio bark (recipe precedes), substituting **milk chocolate** for white chocolate.

2. Stir in 2 cups *each* **mini marshmallows**



Rocky road bark and a cup of hot chocolate satisfy the kid in anyone.

and coarsely chopped **walnuts**. Using a flexible spatula, scrape mixture onto buttered parchment and spread ¾ to ½ inch thick (mixture should almost cover sheet). Sprinkle with 1 more cup *each* marshmallows and walnuts; gently press into chocolate.

3. Let stand at cool room temperature until completely firm, 4 to 6 hours, or overnight. Break or cut bark into pieces. Store airtight in a cool place up to 2 weeks.

Per ounce: 158 cal., 63% (99 cal.) from fat; 2.4 g protein; 11 g fat (4 g sat.); 15 g carbo (0.9 g fiber); 18 mg sodium; 4.2 mg chol.

Peppermint Bark

PREP TIME: About 30 minutes, plus at least 4 hours to set

NOTES: See notes for cranberry-pistachio bark, preceding.

MAKES: About 4 pounds

1. Follow step 1 of cranberry-pistachio bark (recipe precedes), substituting **bittersweet**

chocolate for white chocolate.

2. Meanwhile, place 2 pounds **peppermint candy** in a heavy zip-lock plastic bag; pound with a mallet or rolling pin to crush. Transfer 1¼ cups crushed peppermint to a fine strainer; hold over melted chocolate and knock side to sift fine dust into chocolate. Reserve candy in strainer.

3. Stir remaining unsifted peppermint into chocolate mixture. Using a flexible spatula, scrape onto parchment and spread ¼ to ½ inch thick (mixture should almost cover sheet). Sprinkle with reserved peppermint from strainer; gently press into chocolate.

4. Let stand at cool room temperature until completely firm, 4 to 6 hours, or overnight. Break or cut bark into pieces. Store airtight in a cool place up to 1 month.

Per ounce: 128 cal., 37% (47 cal.) from fat; 1 g protein; 5.2 g fat (2.7 g sat.); 22 g carbo (0.3 g fiber); 10 mg sodium; 0.2 mg chol. ♦