

# STEP by STEP Christmas Crunch



Using a candy thermometer is easy—and it takes the guesswork out of testing. For an accurate reading, place thermometer upright in saucepan with bulb well covered with boiling (not foaming) mixture. Temperature rises very slowly until it reaches about 220°F, then zooms up—so watch carefully.



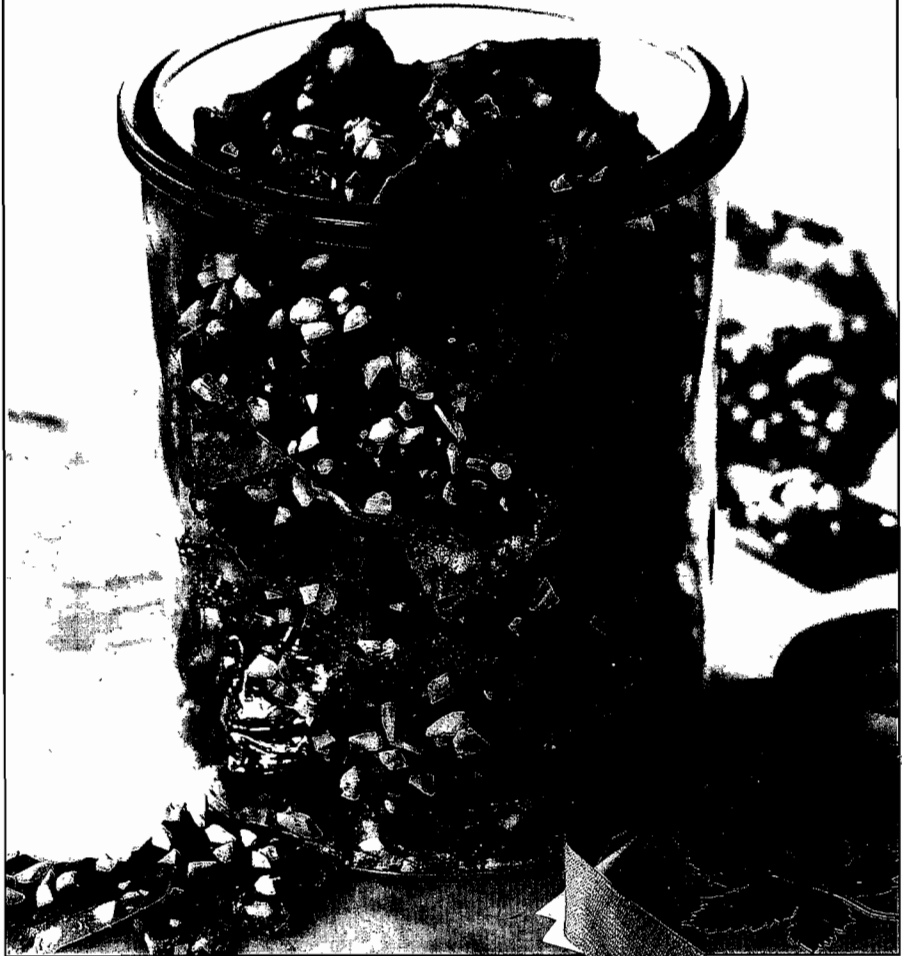
Candy mixture starts to cool quickly once removed from heat. Use a metal spatula to spread mixture as evenly as possible into pan before it hardens. The candy's high temperature will make the pan very hot; use a pot holder.



The chocolate glaze will take about 1 hour to set—longer if the kitchen is hot or the air is humid. (In fact, it's best not to make candy on a hot, humid day.) Use a knife to cut into hardened candy, breaking it into serving-size pieces.

**CLEAN-UP HINT:** Candy mixture hardens quickly on pan, thermometer, and spoon upon standing. To remove, fill pan with water; place items in pan and bring water to a boil. Boil until mixture melts.

*For a gift—or for yourself: A rich, buttery candy laced with chocolate and toasted almonds*



**PREP:** 1 hour plus cooling  
**COOK:** 30 minutes

- 1¾ cups sugar
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup margarine or butter (2 sticks)
- 8 ounces slivered blanched almonds, lightly toasted and finely chopped
- 2 1-ounce squares unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 2 1-ounce squares semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon shortening

In heavy 2-quart saucepan over medium heat, heat sugar, corn syrup, and ¼ cup water to boiling, stirring occasionally. Stir in margarine or butter. Set candy thermometer in place and continue cooking, stirring frequently, until temperature reaches 300°F. or hard-crack stage (when small amount of mixture dropped into very cold water separates into hard and brittle threads), about 20 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat. Re-

serve ⅓ cup chopped almonds. Stir remaining almonds into hot syrup. Immediately pour mixture into lightly greased 15½" by 10½" jelly-roll pan; spread evenly. Cool in pan on rack.

Prepare chocolate glaze: In heavy, small saucepan over low heat, heat chocolate and shortening until melted, stirring occasionally. Remove saucepan from heat; cool slightly.

Remove candy in one piece from pan to cutting board. Spread chocolate over candy; sprinkle with reserved almonds, pressing them gently into chocolate. Set candy aside to allow glaze to set, about 1 hour. Break candy into pieces. Store in layers, separated by waxed paper, in tightly covered container to use up within 2 weeks. Makes about 1¾ pounds candy.

Each ounce: About 180 calories, 2 g protein, 19 g carbohydrate, 12 g total fat (2 g saturated), 0 mg cholesterol, 90 mg sodium.