

Gingerbread Caramels:

Makes about 12.5 dozen

Ingredients:

Vegetable oil cooking spray

4 cups (2 pints) Heavy whipping cream

2 cups light corn syrup

4 cups granulated sugar

12 Tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter

1/2 cup **unsulphured** molasses (Grandmothers brand works well and is available most everywhere, just be sure what you get is not “blackstrap” and specifies “unsulphured”)

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

3/4 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

3/4 teaspoon ground ginger

3/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg (or powdered)

1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Coat an 8" x 13" baking pan with cooking spray, line pan with parchment paper, and coat again with cooking spray. Pan must have at least a 1" lip all around, these are often called “jelly roll” pans.

Leave about a 2" overhang on all sides of pan when lining with parchment paper, this helps to contain the caramel if it's a bit too much for the pan, and gives you an edge to use to help pull the caramel out of the pan.

Bring cream, corn syrup, butter, sugar and molasses to a boil in a large pot (twice as large as you think, because it will rise up almost double while it's heating), over high heat, stirring until sugar has dissolved. Clip a candy thermometer to the edge of the pan (or hang from a string, whatever works for you) and continue to cook over a medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until mixture reaches 248 degrees F, (firm-ball stage); this will take about 20 minutes, sometimes more.

Remove from heat and stir in vanilla, salt, and spices. Immediately pour into prepared pan, without scraping pot. (it may begin to smell a bit burnt, but you will generally be ok still).

Let stand, uncovered, at room temperature, for 24 hours, undisturbed. If your home is particularly dusty or you have pets you may want to use aluminum foil or stiff paper to keep the surface of the candy clean.

Coat a large cutting board with cooking spray and use parchment paper to move caramel from pan to board. Cut into 1"x 1" pieces, or size to suit yourself. Wrap in waxed paper. Caramels can be stored in an airtight container for up to one month.

You may want to cut the waxed paper squares ahead of time, as it's much easier to have those prepared and ready for when you need them. Be sure to keep these candies apart from each other until you get them wrapped up, as they will stick together again.

