

New Orleans Pralines, Sweet Southern Confections

Source

frenchquarter.com

Description

There are many variations on the story of how the praline came to be, but most of them revolve around the manor house of the 17th-century French diplomat Cesar du Plessis Praslin – a name that later morphed into the term for the candy. A chef in the kitchen here developed a technique for coating almonds in cooked sugar which, competing stories hold, were used by his courtly employer either as a digestive aid or as gifts to the ladies he visited. In France and elsewhere, the word praline is still used as a generic term for any sort of candy made with nuts.



These early confections traveled with Frenchmen to their new colony on the banks of the Mississippi, a land where both sugar cane and nuts were cultivated in abundance. In local kitchens, Louisiana pecans were substituted for the more exotic almonds, cream was added, giving the candy more body, and a Southern tradition was born.

Ingredients

Yields: about 12 candies

1	cup	light brown sugar <i>packed</i>
1	cup	granulated sugar
1/2	cup	light cream
1 1/2	cups	pecans <i>halved</i>
2	tablespoons	butter

Directions

1. Combine sugars and cream in a heavy 2-quart saucepan and bring to boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, until mixture forms a thick syrup. Add pecans and butter and continue to cook over medium heat, stirring frequently. Remove saucepan to a heatproof surface (such as a wire rack) and let cool for 10 minutes. Use a tablespoon to drop rounded balls of the mixture onto sheet wax paper or foil, leaving about 3 inches between each ball for pralines to spread. Allow to cool.
2. Makes about 12 candies.