ST. NICHOLAS DAY · DECEMBER 6

St. Nicholas peppermint bark

Prep 20 min **Cook** 5 min **Chill** 1 hr **Total** 1 hr 25 min **Makes** About 30 pieces (1¾ lb, 780 g) **Level** Easy

ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED

Cooking is for children and grown-ups together. An adult should supervise at all times and handle the oven, stovetop, knives, and anything hot. Candy cane bits are hard and sharp. Crush them in a closed bag wrapped in a towel, and do not give bark with candy pieces to children under 4, since hard candy is a choking hazard. Microwaved bowls and melted chocolate can get very hot, so a grown-up handles them.

ALLERGY INFORMATION

Contains milk (in white chocolate and in most semisweet and dark chocolate) and usually soy (lecithin in most chocolate). Some chocolate is made alongside peanuts or tree nuts, and candy cane brands vary, so check every label. Always read ingredient labels, since brands vary, and ask about food allergies before you cook or share.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz (340 g) semisweet or dark chocolate, chopped, or chocolate chips
- 12 oz (340 g) white chocolate, chopped (bars melt more smoothly than chips)
- ¼ tsp peppermint extract (optional)
- 6 candy canes (about 3 oz / 85 g), unwrapped

To wrap

- Cellophane bags or small boxes, ribbon, and a tag with no name

METHOD

1. Line a 9×13-inch (23×33 cm) pan or a baking sheet with parchment paper, letting it come up the sides.
2. Put the candy canes in a zip-top bag, close it, and wrap it in a kitchen towel. Crush them with a rolling pin into small bits.
3. Melt the semisweet chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl at half power in 30-second bursts, stirring each time, until almost melted, then stir until smooth. (Or melt it in a bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water.)
4. Spread it evenly in the pan, about ¼ inch (6 mm) thick. Chill about 15 minutes, until set but still a little tacky.
5. Melt the white chocolate the same way, in shorter 20-second bursts, since it scorches easily. Stir in the peppermint extract and spread it over the dark layer.
6. Right away, scatter the crushed candy canes over the top and press them in lightly. Chill about 45 minutes, until firm.
7. Lift out the bark and break it into about 30 pieces. Pack it in bags or boxes, tie with ribbon, and leave the tag unsigned, or sign it “a secret friend.”

LITTLE HELPERS CAN (WITH A GROWN-UP)

- Unwrap and crush the candy canes in a towel-wrapped bag
- Scatter the candy cane bits over the top
- Break the bark into pieces
- Wrap a gift and leave it without a name

GOOD TO KNOW

- This easy method skips tempering, so the bark softens in a warm room. Keep it in the fridge in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks, and give it within a day or two of wrapping.
- Add the white chocolate while the dark layer is set but still slightly tacky, so the two layers stick together and do not slide apart.

A BLESSING BEFORE WE EAT

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen. Saint Nicholas, pray for us, and help us give in secret and with joy, the way you did.