

CHOCOLATE PECAN TURTLE CLUSTERS

Most helpful positive review

have been making these for years now and they are always a big hit. I do offer a couple suggestions. I use the round pretzels that are usually available around the holidays. The Rolo fits nicely inside it and makes for the perfect little treat. Also, after these are completely cooled, I melt a cup of white chocolate chips with a little Crisco, place it into a zip lock bag cutting a small hole in the corner. I then drizzle it over the turtles. They turn out beautiful.

Do yourself a favor and double the recipe. As long as you're going to make them, it doesn't really add much more time and expense, and these were a big hit! I couldn't find Rolos, but I did find Dove Chocolates w/Caramel. They worked perfectly and are very good (smoother/creamier than Rolos). I also used the square shaped "Snap" pretzels. The chocolates fit very well on top. Baked the candies for only 3 min. – more than enough time. I think any longer and you run the risk of the caramel squishing out of the chocolate candy when you place the pecan halves on top. Be gentle or you'll have a mess on your hands, and they'll be sticky and messier to hold when served. Chill them out in the fridge for 1/2 hr. or so and they should pop right off the parchment paper. I also pre-toasted the pecans. Toasting/roasting nuts always makes them taste better. Coated the pecan halves with a little melted butter, and baked for 10 – 15 min @ 325 (watch to prevent burning). Let cool, then proceed w/recipe. Again – something so easy, and they're really popular!

YOU NEED:

2 1/2 C pecans
1/2 C butter (I use salted)
1 C brown sugar
1/2 C light corn syrup
7 ounces sweetened condensed milk (1/2 of a 14 ounce can)
1/2 t vanilla
1 (12 ounce) package milk chocolate chips
1/2 t shortening (I use butter flavored Crisco)

How to make it

1. Toss 2 1/2 cups of pecans into a large skillet. Toast them over medium high heat, stirring occasionally, until they have darkened just a bit and smell fragrant and wonderful. Should only take a few minutes
2. Find yourself 2 large cookie sheets. Line them with parchment paper and spray it with cooking spray. Arrange your pecans into clusters, three to a group works well. You want to leave some space (about an inch) between each cluster.
3. Make your caramel (full tutorial with pictures found [here](#)). Place 1/2 C butter into a medium-sized sauce pan. Melt it over medium high heat. Add 1 C brown sugar, 1/2 C light corn syrup and 7 ounces sweetened condensed milk to the pan. Increase the heat just a bit and stir it continually. Cook and stir until it reaches 235-240 degrees. I generally remove it from the heat when it reaches about 234 degrees. It will continue to rise in temperature just a bit even without the direct heat, making the caramel just the right texture.
4. Stir in 1/2 teaspoon vanilla.
5. Carefully drizzle about 1 1/2 teaspoons of caramel over each nut cluster. You'll want to work quickly, as the caramel will begin to set up. Be sure there is caramel touching all of the nuts in your cluster. The caramel works like glue, sticking the nuts together.
6. In a microwave safe bowl pour 12 ounces of milk chocolate chips. Heat in the microwave for 30 seconds at a time,

stirring after each cooking interval.

7. Add 1/2 teaspoon of shortening to the melted chocolate. Allow it to sit for a minute or two (so it can melt and make the chocolate chips more spreadable). Stir it all together.

8. Spoon about 1 1/2 teaspoons of melted chocolate over the top of the caramel and nuts. Swirl it around along the top making a pretty swoop with your spoon.

9. Allow the chocolate to set up. Once it has hardened and cooled you can serve them immediately, or transfer them to an air tight container.

Enjoy!