

SOFT CARAMELS

Makes 1½ pounds

Flourless cooking spray for greasing

2 cups sugar

1 cup heavy cream

¾ cup whole or low-fat milk

Large zest strips from ½ orange

½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise

⅓ cup light corn syrup

1 tablespoon unsalted butter



Lightly coat a 9-inch-square baking pan with cooking spray. Cut two 9-inch by 16-inch rectangles of parchment paper. Lay one strip of the parchment in the baking pan, pressing it to the bottom and sides.

Lightly coat the parchment with cooking spray. Lay the second parchment rectangle across the pan in the opposite direction to form a cross. Press the parchment to the bottom and sides of the pan and lightly coat with cooking spray. You should have a few inches of paper overhang on each side of the pan.

Combine the sugar, cream, milk, zest, and vanilla bean in a large, heavy saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Once the mixture begins to boil, add the corn syrup while continuing to stir. Continue cooking until the mixture reaches a medium golden brown, 245 degrees F on a candy thermometer, the firm ball stage.

Pour the mixture immediately into the prepared pan, remove the vanilla bean and orange zest, and cool to room temperature. Using greased kitchen shears or a greased sharp knife, cut into squares.

Adapted from the CIA's *Baking at Home* cookbook.

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