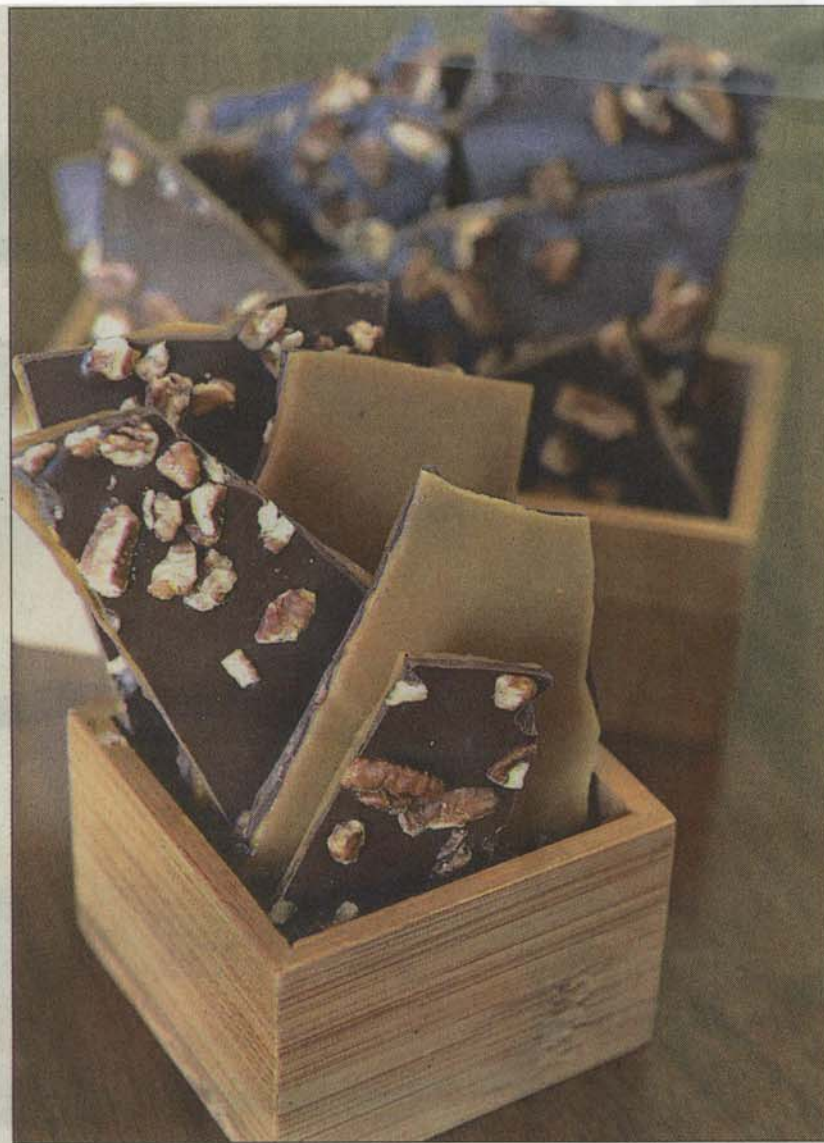


# TASTE

FOOD & WINE  
DINING OUT  
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HELEN L. MONTROYA/hmontoya@express-news.net

Grand Hyatt pastry chef Daniel Keadle presents his toffee in bamboo boxes.

## CHEFS' SECRETS

# Grand Hyatt chef shares toffee recipe

**DEAR PAT:** I attended a recent event at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, and the food was delicious. The dessert included chunks of toffee topped with pecans and chocolate, displayed in small wooden boxes. It looks so cool, and the toffee was exceptional. I'm wondering if this is something I could make at home, assuming the chef would share the recipe. Thanks.

— G.G.

**DEAR G.G.:** Pastry chef Daniel Keadle of the Grand Hyatt says this is a project you can do at home, but if you've never made candy, or tempered chocolate, read through the recipe to be sure you're up for it. If you're game, this luscious toffee is sure to bring out your inner scientist and wow your friends.

First, gather your equipment. A quality candy thermometer is most helpful. Keadle suggests using the slick silicone sheets called Silpat, and they are a wondrous nonstick surface, easy to clean and reusable, but I also tested this with parchment paper and it worked just fine.

When you begin the process, stay with the pot as the sugar mixture cooks and while tempering the chocolate and ignore the phone.

Candy making is both an art and a science. Cooking sugar is a lesson in humility, so if your first attempt is less than perfect, try



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again.

The chocolate must be "tempered" meaning it is melted, then quickly cooled to precise temperatures to allow the right type of cocoa butter crystals to form. This produces the shiny, hard surface needed to coat the toffee.

If desired, you can display the toffee in boxes, as chef Keadle does. He purchases the small bamboo boxes at The Container Store. He fills them three-quarters of the way with chocolate chips and inserts the toffee pieces so they will stand up. Keadle says, "This look is contemporary and in line with Hyatt presentations that are clean and modern."

Keadle is the recipient of multiple honors for his showpiece chocolate creations, gingerbread work, wedding cakes and more. He has been featured in many magazines, television shows and newspapers.

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## Grand Hyatt's Texas Pecan Toffee

### Ingredients

#### Toffee

- 1 pound butter
- 1 pound (2 cups) sugar
- 2 tablespoons corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons water
- ½ tablespoon salt

#### Chocolate

- 2 pounds (32 ounces) chocolate, divided use
- 2 cups pecan pieces, lightly toasted in a dry pan or in a 350-degree oven

### Directions

**FOR TOFFEE:** Prepare 2 baking sheets by lining them with either Silpat (silicone sheets, available at most kitchenware stores and departments) or parchment paper.

Place butter, sugar, corn syrup, water and salt in a good-sized unlined saucepan. If you have one clamp a candy thermometer onto the side of the saucepan.

Cook over medium-high heat until the mixture begins to color. Stir gently with a heat-resistant spatula until it reaches a rich amber color.

You can test the caramel during the cooking process to see if it's done by dropping a few drops onto a cold surface, such as granite or steel. See if it sets up like hard candy or stays soft. It should reach the stage at which it will snap and set up like hard candy.

Alternatively, you can drop a tiny bit of hot syrup into ice water. The syrup should separate into threads that become brittle. This is called the hard crack stage. The candy thermometer should reach 300 degrees. Immediately pour the mixture onto the two prepared baking sheets, spreading it quickly with an offset spatula, if available. Let cool.

**FOR CHOCOLATE:** In the top of a double boiler, slowly melt about 20 ounces of the chocolate.

Have the rest of the chocolate, broken into small bits, next to the stove.

Place a candy thermometer in the chocolate and watch it carefully until the chocolate reaches 115 degrees. Do not allow the chocolate to exceed this temperature. Remove the top pot from the heat.

Gradually stir in the remaining chocolate, adding it in stages, to reduce the temperature of the chocolate.

Continue monitoring the temperature until it reaches 89 degrees, using as much of the remaining chocolate as needed to attain this temperature.

Spread the tempered chocolate onto the toffee, working quickly before the chocolate sets up. While chocolate is still liquid, sprinkle the pecans evenly over the chocolate. Allow the chocolate to set.

Break the toffee into chunks and enjoy.

Makes 24 servings, each 460 calories (59.7 percent calories from fat), 33 g fat, 40 mg cholesterol, 150 mg sodium, 46 g carbohydrates, 3 g dietary fiber, 4 g protein.