

Old Fashioned Taffy

by Jessica Munday

When I think of taffy, I think about the bags of brightly colored, chewy candy we used to buy on the boardwalk. We loved to watch the taffy pulling machines at the candy stores pull and turn with a repetitive rhythm until the taffy was shiny and pretty. When I first tried to make my own taffy, I was surprised to find it was nothing like the taffy I remembered eating! It was more like hard candy that cooled and hardened before it could even be pulled off the pan. After many attempts at my own recipe, I have finally come up with a yummy saltwater taffy recipe, easy enough the children can pull, and it tastes just like the boardwalk taffy!

You'll need candy flavoring of your choice. Before starting, line two baking pans with foil and lightly grease them with butter. Tip: Never use vegetable oils or spray oils! It may be easy, but it will ruin your candy.

In a saucepan whisk together:

- 2 cups sugar
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch

Add:

- 1 cup corn syrup
- 3 Tbsp. half & half
- 3/4 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1 tsp. sea salt



Stir well. Heat and stir over medium-high heat until the sugar dissolves. Cover and bring the mixture to a boil; boil for 3 minutes. The candy mixture will foam and rise quite high in the pan. Watch it carefully and stir down if it rises to close to the edge of the pan.



Remove the lid and clip a candy thermometer to the side. Wash down the sides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to remove any crystallizing sugar. Turn the heat down to medium-high and allow it to boil undisturbed until the temperature reaches about 242°-246° (high altitude) or 252°-254° (sea level). This is a very critical part of making taffy and not hard candy! It is important to keep the heat to medium high heat as it only takes seconds for the temperature of the candy to shoot up. Have lollipop sticks ready in case you accidentally over boil your candy!



Altitude does effect the temperature of the candy, but only by a few degrees. It's easy to tell if the candy is done without relying too much on the thermometer. Use a spoon to skim off a small bit of the candy syrup and drip onto a piece of parchment paper. Wait a few seconds and peel it off. Work with the drop for a few seconds, pulling and twisting it. If it's just right, the candy will stiffen a little, but will be very pliable. If it becomes brittle and breaks, the candy has been over boiled. You must be very quick to test it this way so I recommend using a candy thermometer.

Once the candy reaches the right temperature, remove from heat. Quickly stir in 1/4-1 tsp. flavoring (depends on the flavor concentration) and coloring if desired. Pour one half of the candy syrup into another pan and color the two separately. Pour each pan out onto the two prepared pans. Let cool until easy to handle.

Pull the candy until it is light and shiny in color, and becomes difficult to pull. As soon as it's ready, be creative! Roll the candy into long ropes and either twist the two colors together or cut pieces from each color. Make thin twisted ropes and rolls the ropes to form taffy-pops. The children especially loved making these!

The younger children also enjoyed joining in the twisting of shapes. Snip the candy into small pieces and wrap individually.

