

Stirring up holiday memories

Written by Deb Egenberger
Thursday, 24 December 2009 14:55 -



Some of my favorite Christmas memories center around my mother's oven and tray after tray of cookies beautifully dressed in chocolate or red and green sprinkles.

I've carried on the tradition of holiday baking and have shared the desire to cause sugar overload with a close friend.

This year we decided to add old-fashioned peanut brittle to the mix of goodies. We even bought a candy thermometer for the occasion.

I held the over-sized temperature-taker on the side of the pot while she stirred the bubbling sugar and corn syrup.

Soft ball stage seemed to take forever but Santa could have traveled the globe in the time it took the mixture to reach hard crack. There are only so many patterns you can stir before boredom sets in.

When the red strip on the thermometer finally reached the top, we scrambled to get the last ingredients into the boiling pan of goo.

Then horror hit. There were chunks of black rising to the top of the sticky mixture. We were so careful to follow the recipe that I couldn't believe it had burned.

We soon realized the black wasn't charred candy at all.

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When she lifted the spoon from the pan, it was as if someone had taken a bite off the end. At least half of the round part had disappeared.

Take away our domestic goddess titles. It never dawned on either of us that 300 degrees would not only cause sugar to harden but it also melts a plastic spoon.

We picked and poked and plucked and stirred to remove all of the visible foreign objects. When the brittle got shiny and hard, it still tasted like burnt spoon.

So, there are peanut blossoms and chocolate bliss and even decadent squares of million dollar fudge in our goodie tins this year along with brightly frosted and intricately decorated sugar cookies.

But there's no peanut brittle.

We may try again next year. Santa delivered a nice set of wooden spoons.