

Peppermint Bark Ice Cream – Comfort du Jour | Terrie Gura

This deliciously festive holiday ice cream is infused (literally) with the flavors of a Christmas candy cane and bits of dark chocolate peppermint bark.

Unlike most of my ice creams, which begin with a cooked egg custard base, this one gets its rich texture from sweetened condensed milk. The base peppermint flavor and pretty pink color are the result of having dissolved a couple of candy canes into the milk portion of the ice cream, and I added chopped up chocolate peppermint bark squares at the end for a fun candy surprise.

An ice cream machine is recommended for this recipe, which will yield 1 1/2 quarts.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 regular size candy canes (if you have mini candy canes, I recommend using about 4 of them)
- 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk* (see notes)
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1/2 tsp. peppermint extract oil
- 1/2 tsp. real vanilla extract
- 9 Ghirardelli dark chocolate peppermint bark squares, chopped into small bits
- 1 oz. good quality vodka*
- Your favorite hot fudge sauce (optional, but yum!) for serving

*NOTES

Sweetened condensed milk is great for ice creams that do not have a custard base, especially when you want to have a brighter “white” base color. I used the whole milk version of Eagle brand, but I expect you could also use a reduced-fat or even fat-free version of condensed milk; if you choose a lower fat option, expect a slightly “icier” texture in the finished ice cream.

A small glug of vodka, mixed in for the final minute of freezing, ensures that the ice cream will scoop easily straight from the freezer. If you prefer not to add alcohol (or, certainly, if you intend to share the ice cream with children or non-drinkers), you can skip this ingredient. Simply take the ice cream from the freezer about 10 minutes before scooping.

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat whole milk and candy canes in a small saucepan, over medium-low heat. As the milk warms, the candy canes will melt into it, creating a pretty color and a delicately sweet minty base. When candy canes are fully dissolved, remove milk from heat and cool then chill in the refrigerator.

In a large bowl or mixing pitcher, blend together the sweetened condensed milk and heavy cream. Whisk in the peppermint milk. Stir in the peppermint and vanilla extracts. Cover and chill for several hours (maybe even overnight) until the mixture is very cold.

Put the chopped chocolate-peppermint bark in the freezer while you freeze the ice cream mixture.

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Prepare your ice cream machine, following manufacturer's recommendations for freezing the chilled mixture. When the ice cream reaches the fully churned stage, add in the chopped peppermint bark pieces and churn an additional two minutes to evenly incorporate the candy pieces.

Finally, add the vodka and churn until the liquid has disappeared. This trick will improve the texture of the ice cream for very easy scooping straight from the freezer. The vodka is indiscernible in the ice cream, but if you (or someone you are feeding) avoids alcohol, it can easily be omitted. Simply remove the ice cream from the freezer several minutes before serving, allowing time for it to soften.

Transfer the finished ice cream to an insulated freezer container and place it in the freezer for several hours, or preferably overnight. Serve it with warmed hot fudge topping for an extra special holiday treat!

For visual instruction and more fun ice cream recipes, please check out my blog at www.comfortdujour.com.