



### Honey Lavender Caramels

*Nothing warms the heart more than a gift of buttery homemade caramels. Fresh butter, rich cream and fragrant lavender make this delicious blend of sweet, salty and floral an amazingly delicate, soft and chewy treat. Try dipping the cut caramels in tempered chocolate (we prefer white chocolate with the lavender) for an even more exquisite treat.*

*Yields about 6 dozen 1-inch square caramels*

### Ingredients

1 cup milk  
1 ½ cups heavy cream  
2 teaspoons dried lavender buds  
¾ cup unsalted butter  
¾ cup honey  
1 ¾ cups sugar  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
½ teaspoon salt

### Equipment

9 inch square pan or an 11x7 in rectangular pan  
A large pot that holds at least 4 quarts  
Candy thermometer

### Preparation

Prepare your pan by greasing it with butter then lining the bottom with wax or parchment paper.

Place the milk, heavy cream and lavender buds in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Once the liquid comes to a boil, turn off the heat and let the lavender steep for 30 minutes. Strain through a fine mesh sieve, reserving the liquid. You may now discard the lavender. Measure the liquid; you should now have approximately 2 cups.

Combine all of the ingredients except the vanilla and salt in a deep saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the mixture comes to a full boil. Using a pastry brush, brush down any sugar that has crept up the sides of the pan. When the mixture reads 240° F on the candy thermometer, begin stirring constantly until it registers 248° F, about 20 minutes total.

Immediately remove from heat, stir in the vanilla and the salt, and pour into the prepared baking pan. Cool the mixture completely until it is firm, at least 1-2 hours in the refrigerator. Invert the caramel onto a cutting board and turn glossy side up. Cut into 1 inch squares and store in an airtight container between layers of parchment paper.

*[Chef's Notes: If you've never made caramels before, don't fret - they're actually very simple to prepare. Choose a heavy pot with very tall sides, as the caramel boils up to about 3 times its actual volume.*

*If using this recipe as a standard caramel recipe without steeping the lavender (or another herb) in the liquid, only use 1 cup of heavy cream. The extra ½ cup accounts for the liquid lost from evaporation and that which is soaked up by the lavender.*

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*Brushing down the sides of the pot with a pastry brush prevents crystallization of the sugar during the caramelization process, resulting in a smooth and creamy caramel.*

*When working with a candy thermometer, there are several temperatures to note: 240° F is known as "soft ball" stage, while 248° F is "firm ball." As sugar gets hotter than this, it goes into "hard ball," "soft crack" and "hard crack."*

*The caramels will keep for one week in an airtight container.]*

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