


NorthJersey.com

 PRINT THIS

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Treats that have 'real taste'

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Last updated: Tuesday March 25, 2008, EDT 8:22 AM

BY JULIA CAMERON

STAFF WRITER

In today's fast-paced society, homemade treats are becoming a rare commodity. After all, why make sweets yourself when you can grab a bag from the supermarket shelf?

Here's why. Take marshmallows, for instance.

In the store, they're uniformly shaped and "jet-puffed," each one looking exactly like the last. They're also sickeningly sweet and often on the stale side.

But make your own marshmallows, and you'll be enjoying treats that "have a real taste," says Glenn Schwabik, pastry chef at Napa Valley Grille in Paramus, where marshmallows are a fixture on dessert and afternoon tea menus. "And nothing tastes better than homemade."

It's not a difficult or laborious process. At Napa Valley, Schwabik can prepare a batch in about 30 minutes.

For the rest of us, there's Eileen Talanian's new book, "Marshmallows: Homemade Gourmet Treats" (Gibbs-Smith, 2007), which easily guides readers through the process.

* Blooming: Unflavored gelatin is added to cold water to slowly release its binding power. That little bit of gelatin ultimately will give the marshmallows their bounce and elasticity. For flavored marshmallows, extracts or fruit purées to the bloom can replace some or all of the water.

* Candymaking: The bulk of the work isn't much different than making hard candy. Water, sugar, a pinch of salt and a sugary syrup base (nothing more than sugar dissolved in water, with salt and cream of tartar; some recipes call for corn syrup) are heated in a saucepan until they reach the hardball stage, the point at which the mix, if left alone, would cool into a giant piece of candy. For your own protection, "keep ice water next to you — just in case — since the sugar mixture is very hot," Schwabik suggests.

* Agitating: The bloom and candy are joined in a stand mixer, which incorporates air into the candy batter, ultimately giving the marshmallows their fluff. After about 10 minutes, the mixture will have increased two to three times in volume and turned from watery to white and glossy. When the batter stops growing in volume, it's finished.

* Resting: The batter is poured and spread evenly across a pan that's been sprayed with nonstick cooking spray, then wiped down

so only a thin film of oil remains. After sitting for a few hours — overnight is better — they're ready to be cut to any shape you'd like.

* Finishing: Commercial marshmallows are tossed in cornstarch to keep them from sticking together, but a mixture of cornstarch and powdered sugar will be much more flavorful.

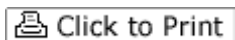
Of the entire process, cleaning up from the cooking and mixing is the hardest part, Schwabik said. He always has a tub of hot, soapy water standing by.

"It's so sticky when you're done, and you can soak your dishes right away."

E-mail: cameronj@northjersey.com

Find this article at:

http://www.northjersey.com/food/news/Treats_that_have_real_taste.html



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Copyright © North Jersey Media Group