Salt Water Taffy

makes about 60 pieces of taffy

2 cups sugar
2 TBS corn starch
3/4 tsp. salt
3/4 cup water
1 cup light corn syrup (*see note)
2 tsp. glycerin (*see note)
2 TBS butter (*see note)
flavoring (extracts, oils, etc.)
coloring (optional)

Tools and Supplies:
candy thermometer
silicone mats (2 — *see note)
wax paper
disposable vinyl gloves (*see note)

Before starting, prepare your pans by greasing the sides and laying down the silicone mats. Gather up everything you'll need for the recipe beforehand as time is precious near the end — you'll avoid having to scramble for things if you have everything ready to go. Also, enlist some help to start cutting the 3 x 3 inch wax paper squares for wrapping.

Combine the sugar, salt and corn starch in the saucepan, and mix well. Add corn syrup and water, stirring frequently over medium heat so the sugar and salt are fully dissolved before it comes to a boil. Once boiling, stop stirring and brush the inside edges of the pan down with a moist pastry brush. Boil until syrup reaches 260 degrees (*see note).

Remove the saucepan from the heat. Very gently stir in the food coloring and vanilla. Pour mixture onto the prepared baking sheets and allow to cool just enough to handle. The centers will take longer to cool than the edges, so after a little while of cooling fold the edges over into the center of the taffy to prevent it from cooling unevenly.

Butter or spray your hands with a non stick cooking spray and begin to pull the taffy until it's light in color and has a satiny gloss (*see note). For a group who are pulling individual portions, instructions should be given to "use your fingertips to lift the candy up, and then to pull out about 12 inches. Quickly fold the taffy back from one hand to the other, catching the center, and then pulling again." If just two people are pulling, you should pull the taffy in a pattern, pulling the ends out from center, then folding them into the middle.

When your taffy is very hard to pull and holds its shape when laid out on a platter, it's ready to cut into pieces. Use either a greased knife or kitchen scissors to cut the hardened taffy into bite sized pieces. Wrap the pieces in wax paper squares, twisting each end.

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