

U The Lexingtonienne U

NEW ORLEANS PRALINES

Lightly adapted from the Joy of Cooking

Makes 24 pralines

Note that you will need:

a candy thermometer
wax paper or parchment paper

- 2 C pecans (whole or in pieces)
- 2 C sugar
- 1/2 C packed light brown sugar
- 1 C buttermilk
- 1 tsp baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 1/2 stick unsalted butter, softened and cut into small chunks
- 1 tsp vanilla

Preheat oven or toaster oven to 350. Line a baking sheet with foil, spread pecans into a single layer, and toast - stirring frequently - until very lightly browned and just becoming fragrant. This will only take a few minutes. (Tip: Watch them the whole time... I have burned pecans too many times to count.)

Line 2 baking sheets with wax or parchment paper.

In a large, heavy saucepan with high sides, combine sugar, brown sugar, buttermilk, baking soda, and salt. Stir over low heat with a wooden spoon until the sugar is dissolved. Use a pastry brush dipped in warm water to brush down the sides of the pan. (This will dissolve any sugar that gets on the sides from stirring and will prevent it from forming hard crystals).

Add butter and stir until it is completely melted. Increase heat to medium and attach a warmed* candy thermometer to the saucepan. Cook without stirring until the temperature reaches 236 degrees (the "soft-ball" stage).

Remove from heat and quickly stir in toasted pecans and vanilla extract. Beat with a wooden spoon for about 1-2 minutes, or until mixture thickens and becomes opaque. (You'll know when you get there.)



Drop by tablespoonfuls onto the lined baking sheet. Use another spoon to help scoop the mixture - which will be thick and sticky - off the tablespoon. (Do NOT use your finger! Remember, that mixture is 236 degrees.)

Let the pralines stand for about 30 minutes until they are completely cool. Store between layers of wax or parchment paper in Tupperware for up to several days.

**You can "preheat" the candy thermometer by immersing it in warm water for a minute. Be sure to wipe the water off of it before you put it in the pan.*

