

Candied Orange Peel, or Orangettes

a recipe from www.maureenabood.com

Candied peel takes two basic steps: blanching, then simmering in sugar syrup. We've washed parsley three times, chilled cookie dough three times, and now we're going to blanch citrus peels three times. The triple blanching is essential to extracting the bitterness from the peel and tenderizing it.

Candied peel is exceptional dipped in dark chocolate—we're not tempering the chocolate here, just melting it for dipping, which means the dipped candy should then be refrigerated to harden the chocolate and prevent a bloomy white surface from forming (still very edible, just not pretty). Dip the peels in chocolate the day you are going to eat them. It's best not to use the chocolate chips you'd use for cookies. They have stabilizers in them that prevent them from fully melting. I used them the day I made the dipped peel for you, and it made for a very thick coating of chocolate that was difficult to dip into.

Keep your candied peels in an airtight container (or ziplock bag) stored in the refrigerator. They make a lovely gift in a small clear bag or glass container, tied with a ribbon.

3 organic navel or Valencia oranges or 6 clementines
4 cups sugar (2 cups for syrup, 2 cups for coating the candy)
3 tablespoons light corn syrup
3 oz. semi-sweet chocolate (preferably not chocolate chips), optional

Wash and dry the oranges. Score them in quarters from stem to navel and peel. Slice the quarters into ½ inch lengths. Cut the slices in half crosswise, on the bias.

Place the peels in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat and blanch for two minutes. Drain the peels and repeat this process two more times using fresh cold water each time—this is key.

After the third blanching, leave the peels in a colander while you make the sugar syrup in the same saucepan you've blanched in.

Combine 2 cups of the sugar, 3 tablespoons of corn syrup, and 1 cup of water in your saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Don't agitate or stir the syrup at this stage—that can introduce crystallization into the mixture.

Add the peels to the syrup and reduce the heat to medium low. Simmer the peels until they are completely translucent, 60-90 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Drain the peels in a colander, reserving the orange-infused syrup if you like. It's delicious stirred into tea or even just ice water.

The peels are hot, so be careful with the next step.

Line a sheet pan with waxed paper. Spread 2 cups of sugar evenly over the waxed paper. Using tongs, or your fingers if the peels have cooled a bit, lay the peels on the sugar to cool. Be sure to separate the peels so they are not touching each other, or else they will stick together.

Let the peels cool and dry, resting there on the sugar, for 3-4 hours. Then toss them in the sugar to coat. Knock off any excess sugar or any clumps that may have formed while they were cooling.

Place in an airtight container and refrigerate. Peels will keep for at least a month this way.

To dip the peels in chocolate, finely chop and melt the chocolate. You can melt the chocolate in a small bowl placed into or over a bain marie (a pan of water that's been brought to a boil and turned off). Just be careful not to get any water into the chocolate. Or, melt the chocolate in the microwave using 30-second intervals and stirring as you go.

Dip the peel halfway into the smooth, melted chocolate and place on another sheet pan lined with waxed paper. Refrigerate until firm, and eat them the same day.