

Sugar Syrup

Written by W.J.Pais

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For 1 cup water add 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar or firmly packed brown sugar plus 1/4 cup liquid (use liquid called for in recipe).

Use a copper unlined vessel, because copper is responsive to the heat, the pan gives instant control as one boils the syrup to just the right temperature.

To make a [sugar syrup](#), add a quantity of sugar to a heavy-bottomed pan. Add some water to cover it. The exact amount is unimportant, but the more water you add, the longer your syrup will have to boil to evaporate the extra water. What you're doing in making a sugar syrup is dissolving the sugar in the water, then creating a supersaturated solution as the water evaporates. As it evaporates the temperature rises, and the character of the finished syrup is established. The higher the temperature to which you cook the syrup, the harder it will set when it cools. Depending on whom you ask, there are between seven and eleven stages to which you can take the syrup, and these stages are separated only by a few degrees. At the low end, the "thread stage" starts around 215°F (102°C) and caramel is reached at 320°F (160°C), just before burning.

The great challenge of making a sugar syrup is that all the abundant sugar molecules are just waiting for an excuse to glom together into crystals, so you often add a bit of acid (lemon juice) or sweetener (corn syrup, honey or liquid glucose) to retard this tendency. You also do not stir the syrup once it begins to boil, and many people take the step of carefully washing down the inside of the pan with a damp pastry brush to dissolve any crystals that have formed at the edge.

Once the syrup reaches the desired temperature, the bottom of the pan is plunged into a bowl of cold water or the syrup is poured into a heat-proof measuring cup or other cool receptacle to stop the cooking.

[See Recipe](#)