

CHOCOLATE CHERRY CORDIALS

Making candy from scratch can be frustrating and filled with peril. These chocolate covered cherries, however, are easy! They look great and taste wonderful, and nobody else needs to know how simple they really are. If you are planning on giving them as gifts, make them early...they need to ripen for at least a week to allow the centers to soften and liquefy. For a non-traditional look, try using white chocolate. Merry Christmas!

60 Maraschino Cherries with stems (There are usually about 30 in a 10 ounce jar)
3 Tablespoons Butter, softened
3 Tablespoons light Corn Syrup
2 cups Confectioners Sugar, sifted
12 ounces Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips
1/2 brick (2 oz) Paraffin Wax

Drain cherries thoroughly on paper towels for at least 15 minutes.

In a small bowl, combine the corn syrup and softened butter. Stir in the confectioner's sugar. Knead with your hands until smooth. If the mixture is too soft to handle, place in the refrigerator to chill well.

Take about 1 teaspoon of the sugar mixture, about the size of a marble, and wrap it around each cherry. I find it easiest to flatten out the mixture to about the size of a silver dollar, then wrap it around the cherry. Gently roll the covered cherry between your hands in a circular motion to make it round and smooth. Place the coated cherries upright on a baking sheet lined with waxed or parchment paper. Chill until firm.

Melt the chocolate chips and paraffin over a double boiler. This may take a while, so be patient and stir occasionally. Chocolate that overheats and separates cannot be used. Once the chocolate mixture has no lumps, hold a cherry by the stem and dip it in the chocolate. Spoon chocolate over the cherries to coat. Be sure to completely seal the cherries around the stem, otherwise the cherry juice may leak out after the chocolate has set. Let the excess chocolate drip off of the cherries, and place them back on waxed or parchment paper. Chill until the chocolate is firm. Once cool, feel free to re-dip the cherries and place in small paper holders (which is what I do).

Place the candies in a tightly covered container. Let stand at room temperature at least 3 days before serving. Store tightly covered.

LIQUEUR CHERRIES:

Reserve 1 cup of the cherry liquid in a small sauce pan, bring it to a boil, and reduce by 1/2. Remove from heat and stir in 1/2 cup Amaretto or Crème de Cacao, then stir in the cherries. Leave them overnight in the sauce pan to soak. The next day, remove the cherries from the syrup and drain well. Place on paper towels to drain and dry, and continue with the directions above.