

## Pecan Pralines

**HANDS-ON:** 20 MINUTES • **COOKING:** 15 TO 20 MINUTES • **YIELD:** 1 1/4 CUPS; 20 SERVINGS

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup shelled raw pecan halves (see variations below)
- 1/4 cup honey, agave nectar, maple syrup, sorghum syrup, **or** brown rice syrup
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened, preservative-free coconut milk (regular, not lite), optional
- 1/4 teaspoon finely ground, unrefined sea salt, optional
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, apple pie spice, **or** pumpkin pie spice, optional

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat an oven or toaster oven to 350° F.
2. Line a 9-inch cake pan or pie plate, a 9x12- or 8x10-inch baking pan, or a rimmed baking sheet with unbleached parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
3. Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and stir enough to thoroughly coat the nuts. Scrape the mixture (nuts and all the liquid) onto the prepared pan. With a lightly greased flexible spatula or large spoon, spread the nuts one layer deep.
4. Bake for 10 minutes. Stir, then bake for another 5 minutes until the coating looks dry. Check frequently after the first 10 minutes; nuts burn quickly.
5. Remove the pan from the oven. Let cool for 5 minutes, and then turn the nuts over using one or two heatproof spatulas. Bake 4 to 6 more minutes to crisp the other side. Place the tray on a rack to cool.
6. When cool enough to handle, break the nuts apart or place them on a cutting board and chop into 1/4-inch pieces. Store in a covered glass bowl or jar in the refrigerator. Use within 3 months for best results.

### VARIATIONS

- \* **Almond Pralines:** Replace pecan halves with shelled, raw, whole almonds.

Consider making a double, triple, or quadruple batch of these crunchy candied nuts. They're easy to make, fun to eat, and versatile. After scouring many cookbooks, I settled on baking the pralines—rather than cooking them on the stovetop—to reduce the hands-on time. I got the idea from Debra Lynn Dadd's website, [www.sweetsavvy.com](http://www.sweetsavvy.com). Instead of using sugar or evaporated cane juice, my recipe calls for local honey. Coconut milk is used in place of cream. If you leave out the coconut milk, the nuts will have a more pronounced crunchy, candy-like coating. Sea salt enhances the flavor.

**1 TABLESPOON (w/COCONUT MILK):**  
59 calories  
0.5 gram protein  
4.7 grams carbohydrate  
4.2 grams fat  
1 milligram sodium

**1 TABLESPOON (w/OUT COCONUT MILK):**  
56 calories  
0.5 gram protein  
4.6 grams carbohydrate  
3.9 grams fat  
0 milligrams sodium

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**FYI:** I don't recommend eating these by the handful. Half a cup of nuts packs 300 to 400 calories *before* you add syrup or coconut milk. I recommend that you measure out 1 or 2 tablespoons per person, then coarsely chop and sprinkle them over Ice Dream or fruit salad, or add them to the ice cream maker during the last two minutes of churning.

# THE ICE DREAM COOKBOOK by Rachel Matesz

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## Pecan Pralines ~ continued

- \* **Walnut Pralines:** Replace pecan halves with shelled, raw walnut halves. Before mixing the walnuts with the syrup, wrap them in a clean kitchen towel and rub to loosen the skins. Pick out the nuts and discard the bitter skins.
- \* **Cashew Pralines:** Replace pecan halves with shelled, raw, whole cashews.
- \* **Pumpkin Seed Pralines:** Replace pecan halves with shelled, raw, green pumpkin seeds, sometimes labeled Pepitas. Do not use the seeds from a fresh pumpkin—they contain a tough outer shell that is difficult to digest.
- \* **Sesame Seed Pralines:** Replace pecan halves with shelled, raw, unhulled brown or black sesame seeds. For a colorful effect, use a combination of the black and brown sesame seeds. These pralines will clump up more than whole nuts but they'll still taste great and add a delightful crunch when sprinkled over Ice Dream. No need to chop these.

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You can substitute different kinds of nuts (see variations) and sweeteners. Use light colored honey for a mild flavor, darker honey for a stronger flavor. The darkest varieties taste similar to molasses. Agave nectar, maple syrup, sorghum syrup, and brown rice syrup work equally well, each having a slightly different flavor. Maple syrup contains less sugar per tablespoon than the other syrups, and is a good choice if you prefer a less sweet taste.

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