

## Gibraltar Peppermint Sticks

### **History:**

Gibraltar, as in Gibraltar Rock, gets its name from the Battle of Gibraltar in 1607, and refers to any number of hard candies, lozenges, penides, sticks, lollipops, and drops that descended from ancient Arab boiled sugar, dating back to the 17th century. The hard candy would have just been called Gibraltar, a nickname, not a brand name, as in: "Have a stick of Gibraltar! It's hard as rock!" Modern hard candies, as we know them today, were first produced in the 17th century, and those living in larger cities, such as Boston or New York City, might have gotten them regularly on incoming merchant ships. Peppermint dates even further back, to Ancient times, having first been used as a medicinal lozenge or herb for upset stomachs and sore throats, then later as a precursor to toothpaste; but as a candy stick, it most likely came from Germany in the late 16th or early 17th centuries. This recipe makes 12 peppermint sticks with as basic of ingredients as you can get, much the way they would have been made in the 17th century.



### **Ingredients:**

3 c granulated sugar

1 tsp peppermint extract (Old recipes would have used peppermint oil.)

½ c water

¾ c light corn syrup (Old recipes would have used a molasses or cane syrup.)

¾ tsp red food coloring

¼ tsp cream of tartar

### **Directions:**

Combine sugar, water, syrup, and cream of tartar in a saucepan, and heat until sugar has dissolved. Divide the mixture into 2 saucepans. Do not stir. Bring to a boil without stirring until a candy thermometer reads 280° F in each pot. Add ½ teaspoon of peppermint extract into each pot. Add the red food coloring to one of the pots only. The mixture should be thick. Oil an enamel or marble surface, countertop, sheet, or slab. Place the mixture from one pot onto the surface, and stretch it like taffy, pulling and forming the mixture into a rope. Set that rope aside, and continue with the mixture from the other pot, following the same procedure. Take both the red and the white ropes and twist them around each other again and again, smoothing out the twist as you go. Cut into desired stick sizes. Oil the surface lightly again, and space the sticks out on the surface. Allow them to harden completely before removing.

Adapted from *Genius Kitchen*, and modified by Leah Angstman.