

The Perfect Candied Orange Peel

Note: If you are just making the peel to serve on its own, you can really ramp up the spices by doubling the amounts given in the recipe. And, of course, you can leave them out all together. I usually make two types of peel: one that is only the outer peel without any pith and the other that includes the pith with the peel. This second type is the best for serving as a candy and for using as the chopped orange peel in other recipes.

- *Makes:* 2.5 cups of peel
- *Hands on Time:* 30 min
- *Baking Time:* 45 - 60 min

Ingredients:

- 2 - 3 large, thick skinned oranges (such as navel), preferably organic
- 3/4 cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 8 whole cloves
- 2 - three inch cinnamon sticks
- 1 star anise
- 1/2 tsp. black peppercorns
- 6 green cardamom seeds
- 1 tbsp. cider vinegar

Steps:

1. **A.** For the thin, peel only version, use a vegetable peeler to remove just the thin orange layer of peel from the orange, leaving the white pith behind. **B.** For the thicker strips, cut the ends off the oranges, then cut down the orange from top to bottom in six cuts spaced evenly around the orange. Carefully work the peel and pith together away from the fruit in the sections created by the cuts. For some reason, it is easier to work loose going from the stem end and working up to the top. Slice the sections into 1/4" strips.
 - Tip: Use a microplane to remove the zest from the cut-off orange ends and save in the freezer for when you need zest in a recipe. Just be careful not to grate your fingers.



1 - Thin peel



2 - Peel with pith

2. Place the peel in a saucepan, cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Drain. Repeat this blanching process twice. This is what helps to eliminate the bitterness of the peel and pith. After the third draining, reserve the peel while you prepare the cooking liquid.
3. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan combine the 1 cup of water, sugar, cider vinegar, and spices. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Simmer the mixture for 10 minutes. After the sugar has dissolved, do not stir the mixture as this action may cause crystallization. You can gently swirl the liquid in the pan if you feel the need.
4. Add the reserved peel to the spiced liquid and return to a gentle boil. Let it bubble away, uncovered, until the peel becomes soft and translucent, about 45 - 60 minutes. The liquid will reduce and the bubbles will appear to be crystal-clear and slow moving.



3 - Peel with pith, translucent



4 - Thin peel, translucent

5. Remove the peel from the syrup and roll it in granulated sugar to coat. Place on a wire rack to dry for several hours or overnight. You can also skip rolling the peel in sugar and just dry it on a rack.
6. Store your candied peel in a plastic container or bag.

Variations:

- For a special treat, carefully melt 3/4 cup of chocolate chips and dip one end of a strip of the finished peel in the melted chocolate to coat. Place chocolate coated peel on a wax paper lined tray and refrigerate to set the chocolate (about 15 min).
- Finely chop the very thin candied peel and use where you might use orange zest - like in pistachio/orange shortbread.