

Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 15 minutes | Chill Time: 2+ hours | Total Time: ~2 hours 35 minutes

Yields: 36 sinful squares

Intensity Level: 3/5 (Requires careful timing and constant stirring)

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A Sweetly Sinister Introduction

Welcome, denizens of the night... and of the kitchen! This Halloween, we're conjuring a dessert worthy of the most infamous Count himself. Behold, Dracula's Dark Cherry Fudge.

This isn't your average, cloyingly sweet fudge. It's a deeply seductive, almost black confection with a rich, intense dark chocolate base, a hint of blood-red cherry, and a whisper of sea salt to balance the darkness. The texture is impeccably smooth and melts on the tongue, a true indulgence for the creatures of the night.

The secret to its sinister allure lies in two key ingredients: high-quality dark chocolate and a

reduction of dark cherry juice, which infuses every square with a tart, fruity depth that cuts through the chocolate's richness. A sprinkling of dried cherries on top adds a final, blood-like garnish. This is the perfect treat for a Halloween party, a spooky movie night, or any occasion that calls for a little dark magic. So, sharpen your knives (or, you know, your spatula) and prepare to create a fudge that's so good it's scary.

Ingredients

For the Fudge:

- 1 ½ cups (about 10 oz) high-quality dark chocolate (70% cacao or higher), finely chopped
- 1 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk
- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ½ cup dark cherry juice (or 100% tart cherry juice)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

For the Garnish:

- ⅓ cup dried cherries, roughly chopped

- A few pinches of flaky sea salt (like Maldon)

Equipment

- 8×8-inch square baking pan
- Parchment paper
- Medium saucepan
- Heatproof spatula or wooden spoon
- Double boiler (or a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water)

Instructions

1. Preparation (Intensity: 1/5)

- Time: 5 minutes
- Line your 8×8-inch baking pan with parchment paper, leaving an overhang on two opposite sides. This will make it incredibly easy to lift the fudge out later. Set the pan aside.
- Roughly chop the dried cherries for the garnish and set them aside in a small bowl.

2. The Cherry Reduction (Intensity: 2/5)

- Time: 5-7 minutes
- In a small saucepan, bring the ½ cup of dark cherry juice to a simmer over medium heat.
- Allow it to gently bubble and reduce until you have about 2 tablespoons of concentrated liquid. This is called a “reduction” and it’s where the powerful cherry flavour comes from. Remove from heat and set aside to cool slightly.

3. Melting the Darkness (Intensity: 3/5)

- Time: 8-10 minutes
- Set up your double boiler: bring an inch of water to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Place a heatproof bowl on top, ensuring the bottom doesn’t touch the water.
- Combine the sweetened condensed milk, butter, and the prepared cherry reduction in the bowl.
- Stir constantly with your spatula until the butter is fully melted and the mixture is warm and smooth. Intensity Tip: Keep the heat at a steady simmer; you don’t want the water to boil vigorously. Constant stirring is key to preventing scorching.

4. Incorporating the Chocolate (Intensity: 4/5)

- Time: 3-5 minutes
- Add the finely chopped dark chocolate and the fine sea salt to the warm milk mixture.
- Continue to stir constantly. The mixture will thicken quickly. The intensity here is all about patience and a gentle hand. Stir until the chocolate is completely melted and the fudge is incredibly smooth and glossy. This should take 3-5 minutes. Do not rush this step by turning up the heat; low and slow is the way to a perfect, non-grainy fudge.
- Once smooth, remove the bowl from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract. The mixture should be very thick and have lost its sheen slightly.

5. The Final Pour (Intensity: 2/5)

- Time: 2 minutes
- Pour the dark, glorious fudge into your prepared baking pan. Use your spatula to spread it evenly into the corners.
- Immediately sprinkle the chopped dried cherries over the top, pressing them in very gently. Finish with a light sprinkle of flaky sea salt.

6. The Chilling Transformation (Intensity: 0/5)

- Time: 2+ hours
- Let the fudge cool at room temperature for about 30 minutes. Then, transfer the pan to the refrigerator and let it set for at least 2 hours, or preferably overnight. This is the “hurry up and wait” phase.

7. The Unearthing (Intensity: 1/5)

- Time: 5 minutes
- Once the fudge is completely firm, remove it from the refrigerator. Using the parchment paper overhang, lift the entire block of fudge out of the pan.
- Place it on a cutting board and use a sharp, heavy knife to cut it into 36 squares. For cleanest cuts, wipe the knife with a warm, damp cloth between cuts.
- Serve immediately, or store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Nutrition Information

Per Serving (1 square):

Please note that this is an estimate and will vary based on specific ingredients used.

- Calories: 115
- Total Fat: 6.5g (Saturated Fat: 4g)
- Cholesterol: 10mg
- Sodium: 30mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 13g (Dietary Fiber: 1g, Sugars: 11g)
- Protein: 1.5g