

CHOCOLATE TORRONE

MAKES 1½ POUNDS

This recipe comes from my Italian great-grandmother. This traditional Italian Christmas candy is made by spreading it out between two sheets of an unleavened wheat wafer called *ostia*. However, I just use two nonstick silicone liners. **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** candy thermometer

1¼ pounds blanched hazelnuts

1 cup honey

1 cup + 1 tablespoon sugar

4 tablespoons water

2 large egg whites

1¾ cups unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spread out the hazelnuts on a baking sheet and bake until toasted, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer the nuts to a plate to cool.

Line a 10 x 15-inch rimmed baking sheet with a nonstick silicone liner.

In a small saucepan, combine the honey, 1 cup of the sugar, and 2 tablespoons of the water. Bring to a boil. Continue to cook the syrup over medium heat until the temperature reaches 320°F.

While the honey syrup is boiling, in a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, start to whip the egg whites on low speed.

When the honey syrup reaches 320°F, stream it down the side of the bowl (not onto the whisk) into the whites with the mixer running at low speed. Increase the speed to high and continue to whip the egg whites to stiff peaks.

In another saucepan, stir together the cocoa, the remaining 1 tablespoon sugar, and the remaining 2 tablespoons water over

medium heat until creamy.

With the mixer running at medium speed, beat the cocoa mixture into the egg whites. Beat in the hazelnuts.

Pour the torrone into the pan and top with a second nonstick liner. Press it out with your hands until it looks even. Let cool, then cut into rectangles with a serrated knife. Store at room temperature.