

Candied Rose Petals

The Martha Stewart of Colonial America, Julianne Belote, suggested dessert was "incomplete without candied and preserved confections in elegant forms." Candied rose petals were a relatively easy — and elegant! — way for early hostesses to fancy up a cake for company. Served in a dish, they made a splendid sweet for tea. Any 5th grader can follow this Colonial recipe for candying rose petals, and share the sweets with friends, family or classmates.



What You Need:

- Outdoor table
- Paper towels
- Red rose petals
- Medium bowl
- Slotted spoon
- Rose water
- Clean spray bottle (food grade plastic)
- White caster sugar

What You Do:

1. Prepare the work area. On a hot, dry day, help your child find a place outdoors in the sun to work. Move the table there together. He should cover the table with paper towels, overlapping them slightly so no table shows through. Take turns reading the original recipe aloud, if you dare.
2. "Take the fayrest rose leaves..." Fill the bowl with cold water. Pull the petals away and let them drop in the water. Swish the water and rose petals gently, then let them soak.
3. "...and sprinkle them with rose water..." Have your child add a tablespoon of Rose Water to the spray bottle and set the spray to fine. Don't spray yet!
4. "...lay them one by one on white paper on a hot sunshiney day..." Lay the petals in a single layer on the paper towels. Now, spray the petals with the mister.
5. "...then beat some double refind sugar very small & sift it thinly on the roses..." Find caster sugar at a candy-making supply store or grind white sugar in a mortar and pestle until very fine, as Colonial housewives did. Show your child how to sprinkle a thin layer of sugar over the petals, a pinch at a time.
6. "...they will candy as they ly in the hot sun..." Stay close. The time needed to dry completely will vary depending on the weather.
7. "...then turn the leaves & strow some rose water on the other side, & sift some sugar in like manner..." Turn the petals, spray, sprinkle. Patience! Let the solution dry.
8. "...turne them often sometimes strowing on water and sometimes sifting on sugar till they be enough..." Repeat three or four times on each side. Taste-test the rose petals. The thin layers of crystallized sugar should make them slightly crunchy. If rose petals are soggy, floppy or chewy, let them dry completely. Then add a few more layers, with more drying time between.
9. 9. "...then lay them in boxes betwixt clean papers & soe keep them all the year." Did you notice the spelling? During the Colonial period, everyone spelled words just as they pleased. That made reading a lot harder! Today, everyone spells the same word the same way -- that makes it a lot easier to follow a recipe (or a "receipt" as a colonist might have spelled it.)