

Homemade Truffles

Patterning makes a serious appearance in kindergarten math. But you don't need to work solely with blocks and beads to give kids practice grouping things into sets. We say, go for chocolate! These truffles are truly easy to make and add a bit of decadence to math practice!

What You Need:

- Two 8 ounce packages of cream cheese, softened
- 5 cups of powdered (confectioner's) sugar
- 6 cups high quality semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon mint extract
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- Unsweetened cocoa powder
- Unsweetened dried coconut
- Nuts (almonds, walnuts, or hazelnuts work well)
- Wax paper (or parchment paper)
- Small gift boxes



What You Do:

1. Beat the cream cheese in a large bowl until it's smooth and elastic. Little by little, beat in the powdered sugar, letting your child help you measure it. Melt the chocolate on the stove (carefully!) or in the microwave, then add it a little bit at a time to your bowl.
2. Once it's thoroughly combined, divide the mixture evenly between 3 bowls. In the first bowl, add a teaspoon of vanilla extract. In the second bowl, add a teaspoon of mint extract. In the third bowl, add a teaspoon of almond extract. Put a post-it note on each of the bowls, to remind you of what's in them, then put all three bowls in the refrigerator for at least one hour.
3. In the meantime, grind your nuts in the food processor and put the ground nuts into a bowl. In another bowl, put the coconut. In a third bowl, put the cocoa powder. You are going to use these as the toppings for three different types of truffles: vanilla nut, mint cocoa, and almond coconut.
4. When the hour has passed, take your first bowl out of the fridge and roll one-inch balls out of the chocolate mixture. Roll each ball in its topping (the vanilla bowl chocolate gets rolled in the ground nuts, the mint gets rolled in the cocoa powder, the almond gets rolled in the coconut). As you roll them, place each ball on a cookie sheet covered in wax paper. When you're finished with the first bowl, put the cookie sheet in the fridge and move on to bowl #2. Let the rolled truffles remain in the fridge for at least an hour.
5. Time to work those math skills! Line each gift box with waxed paper (you can place colored tissue paper underneath it for a shot of color) and then ask your child to arrange the truffles into patterns. For example, you might decide on two vanilla nut, two mint cocoa, two almond coconut. Or you might cluster patterns of three. The main point is to have your child work on grouping the truffles into sets.
6. Once the truffles are packaged, they're ready for wrapping. They can last up to a week refrigerated, and last longer if frozen. They make great last minute gifts...as long as you don't eat them all first!