

Spiced Pecans with Rum Glaze

Why This Recipe Works

Most spiced nuts are made with a heavily sugared syrup that causes the nuts to clump awkwardly and leaves your hands in a sticky mess. We wanted to get maximum flavor and balanced sweetness with minimum mess.

We tried two popular methods—boiling the nuts in syrup and tossing them in butter—and eliminated both straight off. The former made the nuts sticky, and the latter dulled their flavor. A third method, coating the nuts with an egg white mixture, pretty much overwhelmed them with a candy-like coating. What finally worked was a light glaze made from very small amounts of liquid (we like either rum or water), sugar, and butter, which left the nuts just tacky enough to pick up an even, light coating of dry spices.

Recipe: Spiced Pecans with Rum Glaze

Makes about 2 cups

The spiced nuts can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days.

2 cups raw pecan halves

Spice Mix

2 tablespoons sugar
3/4 teaspoon table salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice

Rum Glaze

1 tablespoon rum, preferably dark, or water
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon light or dark brown sugar

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and spread the pecans on it in an even layer; toast until fragrant and the color deepens slightly, about 8 minutes, rotating the sheet halfway through the baking time. Transfer the baking sheet with the nuts to a wire rack.
2. For the spice mix: While the nuts are toasting, combine all the spice mix ingredients in a medium bowl; set aside.
3. For the rum glaze: Bring the rum glaze ingredients to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, whisking constantly. Stir in the pecans and cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until almost all the liquid has evaporated, about 1 1/2 minutes.
4. Transfer the glazed pecans to the bowl with the spice mix; toss well to coat. Return the glazed spiced pecans to the parchment-lined baking sheet to cool before serving.