

Why is my fudge not setting?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Fudge is sugar, butter and milk boiled together, cooled, then beaten until it thickens. Unlike toffee, it is a crystalline sweet: its set and its creamy texture come from many tiny sugar crystals. Getting it to set means getting the temperature and the beating right: see [how is fudge made?](#)

It did not get hot enough

The temperature the mixture reaches decides the texture. Fudge is boiled to the soft ball stage. Below about 116°C, the fudge will not set as it usually would. As a syrup boils, water evaporates and the sugar becomes more concentrated, so a lower temperature means more water is left in it. Too hot, on the other hand, and the fudge turns out dry.

There is no single perfect number. Sources disagree about the soft ball stage, quoting anywhere from 112 to 118°C, and the right point also depends on your kitchen: humidity, altitude and the temperature of the day all make a difference. On a cooler day, fudge tends to reach the soft ball stage about a degree lower than usual.

It was not cooled, or not beaten

Classic fudge is not simply poured and left. The hot mixture is cooled to about 48 to 49°C, then beaten by hand until it becomes thick, creamy and less glossy. As it cools, the sugar begins to crystallise, and those tiny crystals give fudge its smooth, firm texture.

Testing the soft ball stage

Before sugar thermometers were cheap, cooks tested syrup by dropping a little into cold water. At the soft ball stage it forms a soft ball in the water. Sources even disagree on this test, describing the ball as either able or unable to be flattened when you take it out, so a thermometer is the more reliable guide.

Other ways to make fudge

Fudge can also be made in a microwave, which takes about 10 minutes and needs stirring every 2 minutes, and some recipes use condensed milk: see [how to make fudge with condensed milk](#)

Too firm or grainy instead?

If your fudge set, but came out gritty, that is a different problem, caused by crystals that grew too big: see [why is my fudge grainy?](#)

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