

## Chef from the Hood Recipes



**Chef:**  
Chef Julio Anaya

**Restaurant:**  
Checkers, Santa Rosa

**Recipe:**  
Checkers' Candied Walnuts

### Ingredients:

2 cups water  
2 cups sugar  
1 1/2 cups dark molasses  
1 tablespoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
6 pounds walnuts (shelled halves & pieces)

Checkers chef Julio Anaya says, "We make six sheet pans of these walnuts a day to serve with our butternut squash ravioli; our smoked chicken, dried cranberry and arugula salad and on our Sonoma salad with apples and gorgonzola. People always ask about these walnuts! Some customers come in, have the walnuts with their meal and buy a pint to take home. This recipe fills a very large sheet pan, so it's OK to reduce the quantities and make less. It's really important to stir them every ten minutes while baking, so that the walnuts build up a good coating and bake evenly. Give the extras as gifts by sealing in jars or tins, and keep refrigerated. They are best eaten within a few days, while still crunchy."

Boil water in a saucepan. Add everything except walnuts. Reduce heat and let this syrup boil for 15 minutes while stirring occasionally. (Watch very closely as syrup could bubble up and boil over.) Preheat oven to 350° Pile walnuts in center of a very large (ungreased) sheet pan. Pour syrup over walnuts, stirring to coat with syrup. (Be careful! Sticky syrup can burn!) Spread out the sticky mass. Place pan in oven. Every 10-15 minutes, take pan out of oven and rotate walnuts, moving from edge to center. Each time you do this, the walnuts pick up a little more of the syrup, and build up a candy coating. Repeat this process for 1 hour & 20 minutes. Let walnuts cool before packaging in jars or tins.