



## No Cook Peppermints

### Description:

Peppermint is one of Oregon's leading *commodities*, producing 35% of the nation's total of this herb. Like many spices and herbs, peppermint is believed to have medicinal properties, such as help upset stomachs, inhibit the growth of certain bacteria, and when applied to the skin, can help soothe and relax sore muscles. Peppermint is often used as flavoring in tea, ice cream, candy, chewing gum, and toothpaste. Peppermint can also be found in shampoos, soaps and skin lotions. This lesson is a delightful way to talk about an important Oregon commodity.



### Background:

Mint and other herbs have strong flavors, called *volatile organic compounds*, or fragrances, scents, or odors that are emitted when a plant leaf is crushed and exposed to the air. Do you grow mint in your yard or garden? Due to the volatile organic compounds that give mint its characteristic flavor, it is typically avoided and not eaten by deer, rabbits, or other herbivores. Mint production in Oregon has remained steady for decades, although the primary growing region has shifted from the Willamette Valley to Northeastern Oregon.

### Directions:

- 1) Using an electric mixer, or by hand, knead together the first three ingredients (Do not let students handle the peppermint oil; it is extremely concentrated and can burn skin).
- 2) Continue kneading while you add in 3 to 4 cups of powder sugar in small amounts.
- 3) Add in 5 drops of food coloring.
- 4) Process or knead (with nitrile gloves) the mixture until it is firm and smooth.
- 5) Roll the dough into marble-sized balls. Press them flat on wax paper. Alternatively, you can roll dough into long rolls and cut mints into 3/4 inch squares for a different shape.
- 6) Let stand overnight to harden (optional).

Makes approximately 75 candies.



**Grade Level:** K - 6

**Essential Skills:** 1, 3, 4

**CCSS:** RI.1.1, W.1.7

**Social Sciences:** 1.12

**Math:** G.K.5, MD.1

**Time:** 30-45 minutes to overnight

### Materials:

- 1/3 cup of light corn syrup
- 1/4 cup of softened butter
- 1-2 drops of pure peppermint oil\*
- 3-4 cups of powdered sugar
- Food coloring
- Nitrile gloves to handle mixture with peppermint oil

\*Peppermint oil vials can be ordered through Oregon AITC's Free Loan Library

### AITC Library Resources:

**Peppermint Oil Vials Books:**  
*How Did That Get in my Lunchbox?*

### Video:

*From Field to Flavor - The Production of Mint Oil* **More**

### Lessons:

- My Oregon Plate
- Oregon Rainbow

### Vocabulary:

**Commodities:** Crop that is bought or sold, has commercial value

**Volatile organic compounds:** A substance with a scent or gas evaporating from plant leaves when exposed to air.