

How to Bake
The Art and Science of Baking
By Dennis R Weaver
Copyright 2012 by The Prepared Pantry



Chapter 8



Chocolate!

Choosing and Using Chocolate

Chocolate!

Choosing and Using Chocolate

[Part 1: Chocolate Types](#)

[Cocoa](#)

[Baking Chocolates](#)

[Storing Chocolate](#)

[Part 2: Using Chocolate](#)

[Melted Chocolate](#)

[Molded Chocolate](#)

[Fondue and Dipping Chocolates](#)

[Toppings and Drizzles](#)

[Making Substitutions](#)

[Part 3: Recipes](#)

[Peanut Butter Sandwich Cookies with Ganache Filling](#)

[Chocolate Raspberry Sandwich Cookies](#)

[Ganache for Frosting](#)

[Creamy Hot Fudge Sauce](#)

[Buttery Chocolate Cake with Fudge Frosting](#)

[Root Beer Chocolate Cake with Chocolate Butter Frosting](#)

[Sweet Chocolate Braided Bread](#)

[Cherry Chocolate Cookies](#)

[Mississippi Mud Pie](#)

[Chocolate Brownie Pudding Cake](#)

Copyright 2006, **The Prepared Pantry**. All rights reserved.

The material herein is published by The Prepared Pantry for the private use of individuals and may not be used for commercial purposes without the express

consent of the publisher. The information contained herein is believed accurate but the publisher makes no warranties, express or implied, and the recipient is using this information at his or her own risk.

Chocolate!



Part 1: Chocolate Types

This is the eighth and final chapter. If you're a chocoholic, you'll love this chapter. You'll learn about cocoa and the kinds of chocolate we use in baking. You'll learn how to add chocolate and convert some of your favorite recipes to chocolate desserts. You'll learn how to make ganache for fillings and frosting. And of course, you'll learn to make a chocolate fudge cake.

Overview

To many of us, the differences in the array of available chocolates are a mystery. We'll explain those differences so that you will be able to choose the best chocolate for the project at hand.

All chocolate is derived from cacao beans. There are three varieties of cocoa plants, each with its own characteristics. Most quality chocolate is produced from the combination of beans from these three plants. Even among these three varieties, there are differences based on regions and soils. Producers seek the best beans and prize and guard their formulas. There is an alchemy that goes into the balancing and blending of beans to achieve the complex, smooth flavors that we love.

The differences in fine chocolate appeal to different tastes just as in wines. Try a number of different chocolates and decide which you like the best. All chocolates are not the same. Personally, I'm not too finicky about the chocolate that is mixed into the batter for a chocolate cake, but I do like a first quality chocolate in a chocolate chunk cookie, a chocolate coating, or a quality chocolate frosting.

Processing

Cacao beans are picked by hand. While different companies have different processes, generally the beans are roasted first. After roasting, the nibs, or kernels, slip easily from the skins. It is from these nibs that all chocolate products are derived.

If cocoa is produced, the nibs are then ground and pressed to remove the cocoa butter. The cocoa butter is retained for other chocolate products while the remaining powder is sieved and processed into the cocoa we find on the store shelves.

To make baking chocolate, the nibs are ground and made into a paste called chocolate liquor. (The term does not refer to alcoholic liquor.) The chocolate liquor contains the light colored fat, cocoa butter. Using their own formulas and processes, producers add sugar, milk solids, lecithin, and flavors to make different products.

Cocoa



There are two types of cocoa. Natural cocoa is somewhat acidic. Because it is acidic, it can be used with baking soda, an alkaline, to create a chemical reaction and carbon dioxide bubbles for leavening. Dutch cocoa or dutch processed cocoa is processed with alkali so that it is no longer acidic but is slightly alkaline and will not react with baking soda. It is darker and because it tends to have less cocoa butter than natural cocoa, dissolves more easily and is smoother in flavor.

You can purchase either in grocery stores. If the recipe does not specify a type of cocoa, you will need to determine which is best. If the recipe is relying on baking soda for leavening, you will need natural cocoa unless there is another acid—like sour cream or buttermilk—in the recipe.

Natural cocoa is reddish in color and your cake or cookies may turn out brown or reddish brown instead of the desired dark chocolate color. You can make the product darker by adding baking soda to neutralize the acid—one-half teaspoon to one teaspoon in most recipes.

Our Cocoas

Ramstadt Breda Medium Dark Cocoa: This Dutch cocoa is rich and dark. It has a cocoa butter content of 16/18 compared to 8/10 for most store brands. It has a warm, deep, chocolaty flavor without being overpowering. It comes in a one pound pack.

Ramstadt Breda Rich Dark Cocoa: This Dutch cocoa has a cocoa butter content of 22/24 as does the Becolade cocoa. It is our most popular cocoa. It has an intense chocolate flavor but is mellow with no harshness. Using this in baking is like adding solid chocolate to your recipe. It comes in a one pound pack.

Belcolade Real Belgium Chocolate Cocoa Powder: This is a premium 22/24 Dutch cocoa and is our favorite for baking. For me, this is an incredible cocoa. It is as rich and dark as our Ramstadt Breda cocoa but I find the flavor very complex. We sell this cocoa in two sizes: a 6.6 pound commercial package by Belcolade and a one pound package that we produce from bulk purchases.

The Baking Chocolates

Bitter (unsweetened) chocolate is made from pure chocolate liquor. By specification, it must contain 50 to 58 percent cocoa butter though with inferior products, vegetable oil may be added. Depending on the producer, milk solids, vanilla, or salt may be added.

Unsweetened chocolate has a bitter taste and relies on sweeteners in the recipe to make it palatable.



Sweet chocolate—bittersweet, semisweet chocolate has sugar added. These products must contain 35 to 50% cocoa butter but may have as little as 15% chocolate liquor. Because unsweetened chocolate has twice the chocolate liquor, we prefer to use unsweetened chocolate in most of our baking.

Bittersweet and semisweet chocolate can be used interchangeably in recipes though there is a difference in flavor. Often, bittersweet is a more expensive chocolate and to many, a better, richer-flavored chocolate.

Milk chocolate is made with ten percent chocolate liquor. It contains a minimum of twelve percent milk solids. Because it has such a low percentage of chocolate liquor, rarely is it melted and added to batter or dough.

White chocolate contains no chocolate liquor but is made with cocoa butter. Historically, the FDA has not regulated the manufacture of white chocolate so you need to read labels carefully. If the product was made with vegetable oil instead of cocoa butter, it will not perform the same as a product with cocoa butter.

Chocolate chips are made with chocolate liquor with only minimal amounts of cocoa butter. Instead, they are made with vegetable oil and stabilizers to help them hold their shape. Without the cocoa butter, chocolate chips have a different taste and mouth feel. Chocolate chips will have a firmer set in puddings, pie fillings, and sauces than baking chocolate.

Storing Chocolate



Because chocolate contains cocoa butter, it will eventually become rancid as other fats do. In ideal conditions, chocolate with low milk solids content will last for two years while those with milk solids tend to go rancid more quickly.

The ideal storage temperature for chocolate is 65 degrees. Exposure to light accelerates deterioration.

Fluctuating temperatures cause a condition called “bloom” (either fat bloom or sugar bloom) to occur which appears as filmy white streaks on the surface of the chocolate. It does not affect the chocolate for baking purposes though it may for candy making purposes.

Chocolate will readily absorb kitchen odors. Keep chocolate in sealed containers or wrapped tightly and away from odorous foods.

Questions and Answers about Chocolate



What is bloom and does it hurt the chocolate?

Bloom is that white frosted look that chocolate sometimes gets in storage. It is bits of cocoa butter on the surface of the chocolate that is often caused by temperature fluctuations in storage or transit. For baking purposes, the chocolate is unaffected.

Can I substitute chocolate chips for baker's chocolate in a recipe?

Unsweetened baking chocolate is much too intense to be used interchangeably with chocolate chips, even semisweet chips.

It is true that melted semisweet chocolate chips will have a little different flavor and intensity than melted semisweet baking chocolate but in our experience, you can substitute the chips for the chocolate. Use 1/3 cup of unmelted chocolate chips as a substitute for two ounces of baking chocolate.

What makes good chocolate, good?

Chocolate is a proprietary product with each producer having its own process usually shrouded with secrecy. Accordingly, there is a great deal of difference in brands with the better quality brands usually offering better chocolates. Try different chocolates to find the ones that you love.

Cocoa butter is critical to good chocolate. Usually, you'll want to avoid any chocolate product that has added fat, usually listed on the label as hydrogenated fat. That means that they are substituting vegetable fat for the cocoa butter. While other fat is sometimes added to coating chocolates to alter handling characteristics, you'll be happier with a pure product in your baking.

Is white chocolate really chocolate?

That depends on the product and your definition of chocolate. The FDA does not recognize or regulate the term "white chocolate" as it does other chocolate

products. White chocolate does not contain cocoa solids. It should contain cocoa butter along with sugar, flavors, and milk solids. Be aware of lesser products that do not use cocoa butter. Even more so than in dark chocolate, there is a great difference in quality in those products labeled white chocolate or vanilla chips.

Part 2: Using Chocolate



In this section, we will cover how to use chocolate from melting to substituting. Since we love chocolate, we often add chocolate to recipe to make a new chocolate dessert. You'll learn how to do that in this section.

Melted Chocolate

Many recipes call for melted chocolate. Melted chocolate is also used in candy making, in molding, in dipping, and in decorating. This section deals with these uses.

You can melt chocolate on the stovetop or in the microwave. We recommend using the microwave. If you choose to melt your chocolate on the stove, use a double boiler.

To melt your chocolate in the microwave, place the chips or wafers in a microwave safe bowl. If you are melting baking chocolate that has been formed into blocks, chop the chocolate into bits before melting.

Microwave the chocolate for one minute not on a high setting but on a medium or lower setting. The defrost setting works perfectly in most microwaves. Stir the chocolate and then microwave again for thirty seconds on the same setting. Continue doing this until the chocolate is melted and smooth. Do not overcook the chocolate.

To melt chocolate in a **double boiler**, partially fill the bottom pan with water. The water should not touch the bottom of the top pan. Heat the water on a low setting and do not let it boil. Place the chocolate in the top pan. It will slowly begin to melt. As it does, stir the chocolate periodically until it is melted and smooth.

Always use clean, dry containers for melting chocolate. Any water or moisture will cause melted chocolate to go lumpy and thick. If your melted chocolate is too thick, add vegetable oil to thin the chocolate.

Molded Chocolate



Once melted, you can pour chocolate into almost any mold. You can buy molds or you can be creative and use other containers for molds.

Fill the molds one-third full then add nuts, melted caramel, marshmallows, dried fruit, or more. Then fill the mold with the remaining chocolate. Tap the mold on the counter to eliminate any voids. The chocolate will set in about fifteen minutes. Once set, the candies will release easily.

You can use an ice cube tray to make chocolates. A plastic ice cube tray with individual compartments is perfect. Fill each compartment one-third full with melted chocolate. Then place nuts, nougat candy, peanut butter, or melted caramel on the top of the chocolate. Finally, finish filling the compartments with melted chocolate.

Use any of the following ingredients alone or combined for an array of homemade gourmet chocolates:

Walnuts

Almonds

Peanuts

Pecans

Pistachios

Dried Cranberries

Dried Apples

Dates

Maraschino Cherries (keep refrigerated)

Fresh Fruit (keep refrigerated)

Bananas (keep refrigerated)

Mini Marshmallows

Peanut Butter

Caramel (melted candies, apple dipping caramel, ice cream topping)

Your favorite **jam** or jelly

Coconut

Rice Cereal

Toffee Bits or Chunks

Marshmallow Cream

Fudge Bits or Chunks

Fondue and Dipping Chocolate



You can dip fruit, cookies, cake squares, pretzels, or anything else in melted chocolate. If you melt the chocolate in a double boiler, the hot water in the pan will keep the chocolate melted while you dip. A **fondue pot** works even better. At your next party, let guests dip strawberries, cherries, or pineapple or banana chunks in the chocolate. Use a skewer or fondue fork to hold the fruit to be dipped.

For a special treat, put half a banana on a stick, dip the banana in chocolate, and then roll the banana in chopped peanuts. You can also do this with other dipped chocolate treats.

Toppings and Drizzles



You can pour melted chocolate over brownies or cakes to make a great icing. If you would like a softer topping instead of a hard shell, add a bit of vegetable oil to your chocolate.

It's easy to drizzle a little chocolate (or frosting) on your cookies, cakes, or pastries.

Place one-half cup chocolate chips in a small heavy-duty plastic bag. Microwave the bag and chips for 40 seconds on medium heat. Knead the chips to mix the melted chips through those that are not melted. Microwave again for 10 to 15 seconds or until the chips are completely melted.

Cut a tiny corner from the plastic bag and squeeze a narrow stream of chocolate through the cut corner. You'll quickly get the knack and be able to create decorative patterns of your choice. You can use the same technique with frosting.

The cookies shown are **Buttery Shortbread Cookies** dipped in chocolate and drizzled with white chocolate.

Making Substitutions



Now that you know the composition of chocolate products and the characteristics of each, you may wish to substitute one for another. Additionally, you may wish to add chocolate to a recipe, to convert that favorite yellow cake to a chocolate cake recipe, for example. This section will help you make those changes. Since every recipe is different, consider these as guidelines and realize that some fine tuning may be necessary for the perfect product.

Adding Cocoa to a Recipe

Because cocoa contains starch, it absorbs moisture. Consequently, when you add cocoa to a recipe, you must reduce the flour. Reduce the amount of flour by 1/3 cup for each 1/2 cup of cocoa.

How much cocoa should you add? Obviously, tastes vary. A starting point is to look at other recipes, especially those that you have tried and like. Look at the ratio of flour to cocoa and use the same ratio in your recipe.

Adding Baking Chocolate to a Recipe

If you add baking chocolate to a recipe, you will not need to make adjustments in the amount of flour. We recommend adding unsweetened chocolate since the adjustments are easier.

If you add two ounces of unsweetened baking chocolate, you will be introducing about two tablespoons of cocoa butter. You may wish to reduce the butter or oil in the recipe by a commensurate amount. No other changes are required.

Using Cocoa in Place of Baking Chocolate



If you choose to use cocoa in place of unsweetened baking chocolate, use three tablespoons of cocoa plus one tablespoon of vegetable oil for every one ounce of unsweetened baking chocolate. (Six tablespoons of cocoa equals $\frac{1}{3}$ cup plus two teaspoons. Nine tablespoons equals $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus one tablespoon.)

For one ounce of sweet baking chocolate, use one tablespoon of cocoa plus two teaspoons of vegetable oil plus one tablespoon and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of sugar.

Using Baking Chocolate in Place of Cocoa

Two and two-thirds ounces of unsweetened chocolate replaces $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cocoa. Reduce the vegetable oil or butter by two to three tablespoons since unsweetened chocolate contains cocoa butter.

Because sweet chocolate has relatively less chocolate liquor and because of the differences in composition between types and brands of sweet chocolate, substituting sweet chocolate for cocoa is a bit more challenging. For one half cup cocoa, it will take six to eight ounces of sweet chocolate. That much sweet chocolate will add a lot of sugar. For eight ounces of chocolate, reduce the sugar by $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and one tablespoon. The sweet chocolate will also add fat to the recipe. For eight ounces of chocolate, reduce the fat by $\frac{1}{3}$ cup.

Part 3: Recipes—Applying What You Learned

Ganache

Ganache (pronounced “gah nahsh”) is a versatile, rich, chocolate and cream filling. In its simplest form, it is a mixture of heavy cream and chocolate only, but butter and other flavors are often added. It can be thick or thin depending on the ratio of chocolate to cream with high chocolate ratios resulting in a thicker, semi-solid ganache.

Ganache is simple to make. Usually ganache is made by boiling cream and adding chocolate. In the hot cream, the chocolate melts and the ganache thickens as it cools.

Peanut Butter Sandwich Cookies with Ganache Filling



This is really a recipe for peanut butter yoyo cookies—thin peanut butter wafers sandwiched with a creamy chocolate filling. This recipe is bound to be a hit at your house. It’s one of our favorite recipes.

For the very best cookies, use a quality chocolate, though good quality chocolate chips will make a fine filling.

Ingredients

1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4 cup peanut butter

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda

Directions

Cream the butter and sugars together with the paddle attachment of your mixer. Add the salt, egg, and vanilla and beat until smooth. Add the peanut butter and mix.

Add the flour and baking soda and beat until combined.

Refrigerate the dough for 20 minutes to firm up slightly.

Divide the dough into two portions. Using wax paper, roll each portion into logs 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Refrigerate for two hours or until firm.

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Cut cookies into slices just thicker than 1/4 inch. Place them on a greased baking sheet and bake 12 to 14 minutes or until the cookies just start to brown on the edges. Cool on a **wire rack**.

For the filling:

Mix 1/2 cup whipping cream, one tablespoons butter, and 2 tablespoons of light corn syrup in a heavy saucepan. Heat until it simmers. Remove the pan from the heat and immediately add six ounces of semisweet baking chocolate chopped into pieces. Stir until the chocolate is melted into a smooth sauce. The filling will thicken as it cools.

Chocolate Raspberry Sandwich Cookies



Chocolate and raspberry makes a wonderful combination. In this case, it makes a scrumptious filling to sandwich between two sugar cookies. The filling is simply a ganache made with raspberry jam.

This is a very nice recipe to add to your collection. You can make the sugar cookies alone, without the filling. You can make plain sandwich cookies as we have, or dress them up for a special occasion. For Valentine's Day, cut the cookies into hearts and decorate them with candies or colored sugar. For Christmas, cut them into stars or other shapes.

This is a rich sugar cookie recipe with just a bit of almond flavor. The filling is made with chocolate, raspberry jam, and cream. You can make the sugar cookies alone, without the filling. You can make plain sandwich cookies as we have, or dress them up for a special occasion. These are very good cookies.

Ingredients

Cookies

1 cup butter
1 cup granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon **almond extract**

3 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder

3 tablespoons whipping cream

Filling

1/4 cup whipping cream
1 tablespoon light corn syrup

3oz semisweet baking chocolate

1/2 cup **raspberry jam**

Directions

Mix the filling first and refrigerate it to keep it thick. Mix the whipping cream and tablespoon of light corn syrup in **a heavy saucepan**. Heat until it simmers. Remove the pan from the heat and immediately add the semisweet baking chocolate (chopped into pieces). Stir until the chocolate is melted into a smooth sauce. Add raspberry jam and stir until smooth. The filling will thicken as it cools.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Cream the butter, sugar, and salt together with the paddle attachment of your mixer. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each. Beat for five or six minutes or until the mixture is light and lemon-colored. Add the extracts.

Mix the flour and baking powder together in another bowl. Add the flour mixture to the creamed mixture along with the cream. Mix until combined. Do not over mix. Refrigerate the dough for at least one hour.

Roll the dough to a thickness of 1/4-inch on a lightly floured countertop. Cut into shapes with a cookie cutter. Sprinkle with decorative sugars if desired.

Bake on an ungreased **baking sheet** for about 12 minutes or until done. (The edges will be very lightly browned.) Let the cookies cool on a **wire rack**.

Match up the cookies back-to-back in pairs. Spoon filling between the cookies to make sandwiches. Ganache is flavorful and a thin layer is sufficient. Store the cookies in a cool place.

Ganache for Frosting



It is the ratio of chocolate to cream that determines the consistency of ganache. For a thinner ganache, add more cream. For a thicker ganache, add melted chocolate.

Be sure and use a good quality chocolate. Fresh cream is less likely to curdle than cream that has aged.

Ingredients

1 cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon vanilla
8 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, cut into pieces
4 tablespoons butter

Directions

Bring the cream and vanilla to a boil.

In a **medium bowl**, pour the hot cream over the chocolate. Stir until the chocolate is melted.

Stir in the butter.

Let the ganache cool until it reaches a consistency for frosting.

This can also be made with one cup of semisweet chocolate chips though the lack of cocoa butter in the chocolate chips will affect the flavor. If you use chocolate chips, increase the butter to two tablespoons.

Making Chocolate Sauce



Homemade sauce is so much better than most of what you buy in the store. Especially when you use premium ingredients without cutting corners like mass producers do. Maybe it's because it is fresher without stabilizers or preservatives. Maybe it's just because it's yours.

Creamy Hot Fudge Sauce

This is a great ganache-like, fudge sauce. It is thick and needs to be heated to be pourable. If you would like a little thinner sauce, add more cream.

Refrigerate this sauce. To reheat, place in the microwave for 15 to 30 seconds.

Ingredients

5 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate
1/2 cup granulated sugar
2/3 heavy cream
1/4 cup unsalted butter

Directions

Place the chocolate, sugar, and cream in a **heavy saucepan**. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter. Serve warm over ice cream.

Making a Chocolate Fudge Cake

One of America's favorite desserts is a buttery chocolate cake layered with a fudge frosting. True fudge frosting is made with the same technique as chocolate fudge. It is simply spread on the cake before it becomes too set to spread.

Buttery Chocolate Cake with Fudge Frosting

In this recipe, we walk through the steps of making a layer cake and fudge frosting. There are a few tricks to successful fudge making. We'll share those tips. (If you can make chocolate fudge frosting, you can make chocolate fudge.) If you like fudge, this cake recipe is for you.



Ingredients

For the cake:

3 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate
1/2 cup butter
1 1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt

2 large eggs

2 1/4 cups cake flour
1/2 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda

3/4 cup milk

For the frosting:

3 cups granulated sugar
1/4 cup light corn syrup
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup cream

2 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate
1/4 cup unsalted butter
1 teaspoon vanilla

Directions

For the cake:

Prepare two **nine-inch cake pans** by greasing them and lining them with **parchment or waxed paper**. (Use the pan as a pattern and trace the outline on the paper before cutting the circles with your kitchen shears.)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Melt the chocolate and set aside to cool to room temperature.

With the paddle attachment of an electric mixer, beat the butter at medium speed until it is smooth and creamy. Add the brown sugar and salt. Beat until it is light and fluffy.

Add the eggs one at a time, creaming after each. Beat at medium speed for eight to ten minutes or until it is light and fluffy. Add the melted chocolate.

Mix the flour, baking powder, and baking soda together.

Add about one-fourth of the dry ingredients to the creamed mixture. Mix until just combined. Do not over-stir or you may reduce the entrained air in the creamed mixture.

Add about one-third of the liquid ingredients and stir them in. Add another one-fourth of the dry ingredients to the creamed mixture and mix until just combined. Repeat with the dry and liquids ingredients until combined, ending with the dry ingredients.

Place in pans, smooth the tops, and bake immediately for 25 minutes at 350 degrees or until a toothpick stuck in the center of the cake comes out clean.

Cool for five to ten minutes in the pans. Remove the cakes to **wire racks** to cool completely. Frost after cooling.

For the frosting:

Coat the inside of a **heavy saucepan** with butter. The butter will help prevent sugar crystals from forming on the sides of the pan.

In the saucepan, mix the sugar, corn syrup, salt, and cream. Stir well to dissolve crystals. Add the chocolate.

Over medium heat, cook the mixture. Stir gently to keep from burning on the bottom of the pan. Try to avoid splashing onto the sides of the pan where crystals may form.

Cook to a temperature of 234 degrees. You will need a candy thermometer to monitor the heat. (If you do not have a thermometer, you may cook it until it is at the “soft ball” stage.) Remove from the heat and add the butter. Do not stir. Let the butter melt on the top of the candy mixture.

Let the candy cool until it reaches 110 degrees or the bottom of the pan is warm to the touch.

Beat the frosting with a spoon using an up and down motion until it is of a frosting consistency. Frost immediately.

Baker’s note: The trick for making great fudge is to eliminate the sugar crystals and the resulting grainy texture. Crystals form in chains. A few crystals tend to generate crystals throughout the mixture. Make certain that the sugar is completely dissolved and that you do not reintroduce crystals by sticking a spoon back into the mixture with sugar crystals on it. A tablespoon of corn syrup will help prevent crystallization.

Refer to Chapter 7 about cooking sugar for more information about crystallization and how to avoid it.

Root Beer Chocolate Cake with Chocolate Butter Frosting



We had to slip this recipe in. It's such an interesting cake. We first made it for a family party, Grandma Maloney's birthday party. We were to bring the cakes. We couldn't bring just any cake, so we started experimenting.

We had some root beer soda left over from our camping trip. Why not use that? The carbonation will create bubbles in the batter. We added buttermilk. Buttermilk is an acid and will react with soda, an alkaline creating additional leavening.

Three cakes later, we had a very good cake. It was surprisingly light and moist with just a hint of root beer flavor. We wanted it chocolaty but not so much that it overwhelmed the root beer flavor. This worked.

The cake got a thumbs up—from youngest to oldest. We have since experimented with other soda pop cakes leaving the chocolate out and trying different sodas. In chapter 6 you saw a spice cake made with soda pop. With these two recipes, you can try all kinds of cakes. Be sure to use soda pop with sugar in it, not sugar-free.

Ingredients

3/4 cup shortening
1 3/4 cups granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1/2 tablespoon **vanilla extract**

2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup **dutch-processed cocoa**
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 cup buttermilk
1 12-ounce can root beer, not sugar-free

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and dust with flour a 13 x 9-inch baking pan.

Cream the shortening and sugar together. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each. Beat for five or six minutes so that the mixture is light and fluffy. Add the vanilla.

In another bowl, mix the flour, cocoa, salt and soda together.

In three or four additions, add the dry ingredients and the liquids to the creamed mixture alternately starting and ending with the dry ingredients. (Each time that we made this, we added the buttermilk first then one half of the soda and finally, the rest of the soda.) Mix only until smooth.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the cake tests done with a toothpick. Cool completely before frosting with the frosting of your choice.

Baker's Note: When making a cake such as this, you are mixing oil (shortening) and water (soda pop and buttermilk)—which don't mix. The egg yolks act as an emulsifier, a bonding agent between the oil and water molecules and the flour absorbs much of the water. That is why you start with the flour addition—so that the water doesn't overload the fat mixture before the flour is there to start absorbing water. It's also why you add the liquids in stages between the flour additions.

Chocolate Butter Frosting



Though in this instance we are using this frosting for our Root Beer Chocolate Cake, you will find that it is a simple frosting that you can use with any cake.

Ingredients

3/4 cup butter
about 5 cups powdered sugar
2 tablespoons milk
2 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate, melted and cooled

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Additional milk as required

Directions

Cream the butter. Add half the powdered sugar and two tablespoons milk. Gradually add the remaining powdered sugar, beating as you go. Add the vanilla and melted chocolate. Add more milk as required to reach a spreadable consistency.

Sweet Chocolate Braided Bread



While challah is a traditional bread baked for the Jewish Sabbath, it has become popular with everyone, everywhere. It's attractive and has a firm, egg-rich texture that works for dinner, sandwiches, or French toast. It is typically braided with three, four, or six strands of dough (the braided strands are symbolic of love).

Challah is really very easy to make. There is a sense of satisfaction in working the dough by hand and crafting such an attractive bread and it certainly will impress your guests.

In this version, we added chocolate for the dough and a chocolate cream cheese filling and then we drizzled the bread with a chocolate cream cheese glaze. It may not be real challah but it is absolutely scrumptious—maybe our best chocolate bread ever.

This recipe can be doubled.

Ingredients

- 3 to 3 1/2 cups **bread flour**
- 1 packet instant active dry yeast
- 3/4 cup water, heated to 110 degrees
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup **cocoa**
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg at room temperature

For the filling

- 5 ounces cream cheese
- 1 ounce semi-sweet baking chocolate, melted
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 egg yolk

1/2 teaspoon **vanilla extract**

1/8 teaspoon **nutmeg**

Chocolate glaze directions follows.

Directions

Mix about one cup of the flour, the yeast, and the heated water until smooth. This will hydrate the instant yeast. If you are using other than instant yeast, hydrate the yeast separately.

Add the brown sugar, cocoa, butter, salt, and egg and mix. Add enough of the remaining bread flour to make a soft but not tacky dough. Knead until the gluten is developed, about four minutes with a stand-type mixer at medium speed. Set the dough in a greased bowl, cover, and let it stand until doubled, about one hour.

To make the filling, beat the cream cheese until soft and smooth. Add the melted chocolate while it is still hot and mix until smooth. Add the sugar, flour, egg yolk, vanilla, and nutmeg and mix until smooth.



Once the dough has risen, use a knife to divide the dough into three equal pieces. Roll the dough pieces with a rolling pin to rectangles 15 inches by 5 inches. Spread one-third of the filling down the center of each leaving a one-inch border with no filling. Roll the rectangle into fifteen-inch long ropes with the filling inside. Pinch any seams together and roll the ropes with your hands on the counter until smooth.



Braid the three ropes as if you were braiding pigtails and as shown in the picture to the right. (The dough shown is not chocolate.) Some people find it easier to create a symmetrical shape if they start braiding from the center. When you get to the ends, wet them, pinch them together, and tuck them under. You should have a neat, symmetrical loaf when you are through. You can shape the loaf somewhat with your hands. If you don't like how the loaf looks, simply pull the braids apart and start again.

Prepare a large baking sheet by greasing it and sprinkling it with cornmeal. Place the loaf on the pan, cover the loaf, and let it rise until doubled, about one hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Bake the bread for 20 minutes then cover the bread with a large sheet of aluminum foil and bake for another ten to fifteen minutes or until done. The bread should “thump” when tapped on the bottom and the interior of the loaf should register 190 degrees with an **insta-read thermometer**. Let the bread cool on a **wire rack**.

While the bread is cooling, make the glaze. With a hand-held mixer, beat one ounce cream cheese with one teaspoon vanilla. Add 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar and 2 tablespoons cocoa with enough warm water to make a glaze of drizzling consistency. Drizzle the chocolate glaze generously over the bread.

Baker's notes: To quickly bring an egg to room temperature, place it in a cup of warm water.

Cherry Chocolate Cookies



The wind had switched directions out of the north and the snow was starting to drift. The weather forecast was for thirty below. Why were we doing a Boy Scout campout in a Minnesota winter?

The kids didn't mind the weather; they were busy playing "King of the Mountain." They were going to go through lots of calories . . . but we had lots of cookies. By far, their favorite was a chocolate oat cookie with a cherry pressed into the top.

We've made these cookies for a lot of years now. They are a scrumptious chocolate cookie, but the oatmeal makes them substantial. We've never met a cookie lover that didn't love these cookies. And they make great holiday cookies.

Ingredients

1 1/3 cups butter
3/4 cup brown sugar
2 large eggs
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups quick or old-fashioned rolled oats
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
About one jar of maraschino cherries, drained
3/4 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Cream the butter and sugar together. Add the eggs and beat until light and fluffy, scraping the sides once (about five minutes). Add the melted chocolate and vanilla.

Add the rolled oats. Add the flour, salt, and baking powder and mix until combined.

Drop spoonfuls of dough on an ungreased **baking sheet**. Press a cherry deep into the dough for each. Bake for 11 or 12 minutes. Remove immediately to a **wire rack** to cool. Once cool, drizzle the cookie with melted chocolate.

Baker's notes: Chocolate can be melted easily in the microwave. Place the chocolate in a small bowl and microwave in thirty second intervals, stirring after each until smooth.

For drizzling the chocolate, place the chocolate chips in a heavy duty, zipper-type plastic bag. Once melted, snip a tiny corner from the bag and squeeze the chocolate through the snipped corner to drizzle on the cookies.

Mississippi Mud Pie



This is an easy pie to make and very chocolaty. As with most Mississippi mud pies, the filling is a little gooey. Because it is rich, serve it with whipped cream or ice cream.

The easiest way to make a chocolate pie crust is with our just-add-water pie crust mix. Or you can modify your favorite recipe. For a single pie crust, add 3 tablespoons dark cocoa and four tablespoons granulated sugar. Then just follow the directions.

Ingredients

For the chocolate crust:

- 1 1/2 cups **add-water-only pie crust mix**
- 3 tablespoons rich, dark cocoa—**Ramstadt Breda** or equal
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup water

For the chocolate filling:

- 1/2 cup rich, dark cocoa—**Ramstadt Breda** or equal
- 4 large eggs
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1 1/3 cups granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon **vanilla extract**
1/2 cup butter, melted

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

For the crust:

In a **medium bowl**, mix the pie crust mix, cocoa, and sugar together with a fork. Some white lumps will remain. Add the water and continue mixing. Pour the mixture onto a counter.

Knead the mixture on the counter into a uniform ball. White streaks will remain—most will disappear as you roll out the dough.

Roll the dough into a circle ten to eleven inches in diameter, enough to form the pie crust. Transfer the rolled dough to a nonstick, nine-inch pie pan—not deep dish. Trim and form the crust including a decorative edge that will act as a dam to hold in spills. Set aside.

For the filling:

With the paddle attachment and your stand-type mixer, mix the cocoa, eggs, corn syrup, sugar, flour, and extract together. Drizzle in the warm butter while the mixer is running. Continue mixing until it is smooth and uniform but do not over mix.

Scrape the filling into prepared pie shell. Place a pie crust shield over the edges of the pie and place the pie in the oven.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the top looks dry and the pie is mostly set when you jiggle it. An **insta-read thermometer** should register 150 degrees when inserted in the center. Cool completely. Serve with whipped cream.

Protecting Your Pie Crust

A **pie crust shield** keeps the edges of your pie from burning by deflecting the heat away from the vulnerable edges of the crust. It is used for both filled pies and pre-baked crusts and is particularly valuable for long baking pies like pumpkin pies. It is available in both metal and silicone.

The top edge of the crust—along the rim of the pie—is brutally exposed during baking. The pie pan heats and cooks the crust from below while the top and edges are exposed to the hot air of the oven. No wonder the rims on our pies burn.

Every Thanksgiving, when I made pumpkin pies, I carefully arranged pieces of tin foil along the edges of the pies to keep them from burning. It didn't work very

well. Pieces of foil fell off or dropped into the filling making a mess. You can avoid all that. Just slip a pie shield over each pie before putting it in the oven.

Chocolate Brownie Pudding Cake



This recipe makes a brownie-like cake steeped in a thick pudding. Serve it with whipped cream or ice cream.

Ingredients

Pudding

1 1/4 cups water
1/3 cup **semisweet chocolate chips**
2/3 cup brown sugar
4 tablespoons **cocoa**
1 teaspoon vanilla

Cake

3/4 cup all-purpose flour
2/3 cup granulated sugar
4 tablespoons **cocoa**
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup milk
3 tablespoons vegetable oil

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees

Pudding

In a saucepan, heat the water with the chocolate chips until the chocolate chips are melted.

In a bowl, stir the brown sugar and four tablespoons cocoa together. Add the brown sugar and cocoa mixture to the saucepan and stir until mixed.

Remove from the heat and add the vanilla.

Cake

For the cake, mix the flour, granulated sugar, four tablespoons cocoa, baking powder, and salt together in a **medium bowl**.

Add the milk and vegetable oil and mix until combined. Scrape the batter into an ungreased **9x9 baking pan**.

Pour the hot pudding mixture over the batter. Place the pan in the oven and bake for 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the cake comes out clean. Cool in the pan on a rack.

Serve it hot with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

Chocolate Cream Mini-Trifles



These individual trifles make fabulous desserts. Once the dessert cream is made, they are easy to assemble and make.

Ingredients

Trifle:

- 1 brownie mix, baked according to box directions and cut into 3/4-inch cubes
- 1 recipe chocolate cream filling (see below)
- 1 cup cream, whipped
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 4 maraschino cherries with stems
- 1/4 cup pecan pieces

Filling:

This filling recipe will make enough filling for four individual trifle desserts. Double the recipe to make a full-sized trifle.

- 4 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 3 large egg whites
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin (.25 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons water

Directions

Melt the chocolate chips in the microwave for about one minute, stirring after thirty seconds. Be careful not to burn.

With your handheld electric mixer, beat the cream cheese until it's creamy. Add the melted chocolate and beat again until the ingredients are evenly distributed and smooth. Set aside.

Place one inch of water in the bottom pan of a double boiler. Heat the water to simmering, but not boiling. Whisk together the egg whites and sugar in the top pan and place it over the simmering water. With the element set on low heat, continue to whisk the egg mixture until it reaches 110°F, about two to three minutes. Remove the pan from the heat.

With your handheld electric mixer, beat the egg white mixture on medium speed until it has doubled in volume and holds a soft peak, about five to seven minutes. Mix gelatin and water together, just to combine; then quickly add it to the egg whites. (If the gelatin sits for very long it will set up.) Beat the mixture on slow speed to thoroughly combine. Add the cheese mixture and beat just until smooth. The cream should still hold a soft peak and should mound up when dropped from a spoon. This will be a thick, rich cream.

Store the cream in a covered bowl in the refrigerator until you are ready to use it.

To Assemble: In each of four trifle dessert dishes, layer the ingredients beginning with brownie cubes. Add the chocolate filling and then the whipped cream. Repeat. Each layer will be quite thin to prevent overflowing. Garnish each dessert with a maraschino cherry and sprinkle with the pecan pieces.

Baker's note: If a double boiler is unavailable, you can make one by placing a small shallow bowl upside down in the pan of simmering water. Then set the bowl with egg mixture on top so that it's close enough to the steam that it will heat up. (Do not let the bottom of the bowl touch the water.)