

Dark Chocolate PB & J Cups

Makes 10-12 mini peanut butter cups

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz bittersweet chocolate (60-70% cocoa)
- 1/3 cup creamy natural, no-salt peanut butter
- ¼ cup confectioners' sugar
- ¼ cup crushed graham crackers
- 1 jar good quality raspberry or Damson Plum jam ... OR Polaner All Fruit Seedless Raspberry

PREPARATION

1. In a bowl, mix together the peanut butter, confectioners' sugar and graham crackers. set aside.
2. In a double boiler, carefully melt the chocolate (set a metal bowl on top of a saucepan with boiling water if you don't have a double boiler)... alternatively, you can microwave the chocolate in 30 second bursts.
3. Using a pastry brush or a clean paintbrush, brush the melted chocolate on the bottom and sides of mini cupcake liners. It's helpful to stack some the liners together to give more support. **When in doubt, add more chocolate**, since this will be the base for your candy. Place the cupcake liners on a plate or in a cupcake tin and place in the freezer for 10 minutes.
4. Remove the liners from the freezer, and place about one tsp of the peanut butter mixture in each cup. press down a bit with a spoon to spread. Top with a dollop (about 1 tsp) of the jam, then spoon more melted chocolate on top of each cup to "seal".
5. Place the peanut butter cups back in the freezer for another 15 minutes to set. Eat cold or let warm to room temperature before serving.

Chocolate Truffles Recipe

Makes about 30 chocolate truffles.

Basic truffle ingredients

- 8 ounces of semi-sweet or bittersweet chocolate (high quality, 62% cacao or higher), well chopped into small pieces
- 1/2 cup of heavy whipping cream
- 1 tsp of vanilla extract

Optional base flavorings:

- Mint leaves (1 bunch, stems removed, chopped, about 1 cup)
- Cinnamon and cardamom (1 cinnamon stick, 2 cardamom pods)
- Amaretto (1-2 TBSPs)
- Almond extract (1 tsp)

Truffle coatings

- Cocoa powder
- Finely chopped walnuts, almonds, pecans or macadamia nuts

PREPARATION

1. In a small, heavy saucepan bring the heavy whipping cream to a simmer (this may take a while, be sure to stir and scrape down the sides with a rubber spatula every few minutes).
2. If you are using one of the other recommended flavorings, stir it in with the cream (and ignore vanilla in the next step). If adding mint or other solids, after the cream simmers, remove from heat and let seep for an hour. Then strain away solids, and return the cream to a simmer and proceed with recipe.
3. Place the chocolate in a separate bowl. Pour the cream over the chocolate, add the vanilla, and allow to stand for a few minutes, then stir until smooth. (This chocolate base is called ganache.)
4. Allow to cool, then place in the refrigerator for two hours. Remove and with a tsp roll out balls of the ganache. Roll in your hands quickly (as it will melt from the heat of your hands) and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Place in the refrigerator overnight.
5. Roll in cocoa powder or chopped nuts and serve, or place back in the refrigerator until needed.

Bittersweet Chocolate-Guava Truffles

INGREDIENTS

- 20 oz bittersweet chocolate (66%-72% cacao content), divided
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- 2/3 cup guava puree
- 2 TBSPs unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted

PREPARATION

1. PLACE 8 ounces of the bittersweet chocolate in a 2 quart heat-safe bowl. Warm the cream in a small saucepan over MED/HI heat until bubbles form around the edges. IMMEDIATELY pour the hot cream over the chopped chocolate and let stand for 30 seconds. Stir together with a heat safe silicone spatula until completely smooth and all the chocolate is melted. Stir in the guava puree and blend thoroughly. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap, cool to room temperature, then chill in the 'fridge until thick, but not stiff – about 1 hour.
2. LINE a baking sheet with wax or parchment paper. Using a 1 inch diameter ice cream scoop, scoop out the truffles and place on the parchment paper. IF they are still soft at this point, chill in 'fridge additional 15-30 minutes.
3. DUST your hands with cocoa powder and roll the truffles into balls between your palms. Replace on paper and chill briefly.
4. PLACE 9 ounces of the chocolate in the top of a double boiler over hot water. Stir often with a rubber spatula to ensure even melting...OR melt in microwave in 30 second bursts, stirring after each 30 seconds. Remove the top portion of the double boiler if you are using and wipe the bottom and sides VERY DRY! This step is very important; water in your chocolate will make it seize up and it'll be ruined. STIR the remaining chocolate in 3 stages, making sure each batch is melted before adding the next.
5. LINE another baking sheet with parchment and dip each truffle into the melted chocolate (using a plastic fork w/the middle tines broken out – or a truffle dipper). HOLD the truffle over the bowl and let the excess chocolate drip off. Place on the second baking sheet and repeat with remaining truffles.
6. LET the chocolate set at room temp – or in 'fridge for about 15 minutes
7. STORE the truffles in between layers of wax paper in an airtight plastic container in the 'fridge, away from any strongly flavored/scented food for up to 2 weeks. To freeze up to 3 months, wrap the container tightly in several layers of plastic wrap and aluminum foil. If frozen, thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature before serving.

White Chocolate-Lime Truffles

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz white chocolate (31%-35% cacao content), very finely chopped
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- finely grated zest of 4 large limes
- ½ cup confectioner's sugar, sifted
- about 1 cup toasted coconut flakes

PREPARATION

1. PLACE the finely chopped white chocolate in a 2 quart heat-safe bowl.
2. IN a ½ quart saucepan, bring the cream to a boil over MEDIUM heat. ADD the lime zest, COVER the pan, TURN OFF the heat and let the cream steep for 15 minutes.
3. Uncover the pan and bring the cream back up to a boil over medium heat. STRAIN the cream through a fine mesh strainer over the chocolate and STIR together with a heat safe silicone spatula until the chocolate is melted and the mixture is smooth.
4. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap, cool to room temperature, then chill in the 'fridge until thick, but not stiff – about 40 minutes.
5. LINE a baking sheet with wax or parchment paper and place the confectioner's sugar and/or the toasted coconut each in a small bowl. Using a 1 inch diameter ice cream scoop, scoop out the truffles and place on the baking sheet. Roll the truffles into balls between your palms, then roll each ball into the confectioner's sugar or toasted coconut, coating them completely. Replace on the baking sheet.
6. SERVE at room temperature in fluted paper candy (or mini-muffin) cups.
7. STORE the truffles in between layers of wax paper in an airtight plastic container in the 'fridge, away from any strongly flavored/scented food for up to 2 weeks. To freeze up to 3 months, wrap the container tightly in several layers of plastic wrap and aluminum foil. If frozen, thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature before serving



Chocolate Mendiants

February 3, 2012 in Candies, Chocolate, Recipes
at www.bakingbites.com

Mendiants are a traditional French confection made with a disc of chocolate topped with dried fruits and nuts. They're typically very colorful and they are so versatile that they never get boring.

Mendiants can be made with white, milk or dark chocolate and any combination of topping elements. Whole nuts, such as almonds and hazelnuts, are traditionally the "anchor" of a mendant and other nuts and dried fruits are added for color and flavor. The key to a good mendant is to experiment with flavors that you like, but to try to chose combinations that look as good as they taste so that the candies are visually appealing, too.

INGREDIENTS

- 8-oz white, milk or dark chocolate, tempered*
- nuts: *almonds, walnuts, pistachios*
- dried fruit: *raisins, cranberries, cherries*
- other toppings: *gingersnap cookie pieces, cacao nibs, coarse salt*

PREPARATION

1. Line a baking sheet or two with parchment paper.
2. Place nuts, dried fruits and other toppings in small, easy-to-access bowls near your work station.
3. Pour tempered chocolate into a piping bag or large ziploc bag. Snip a small hole as a tip in the bag and pipe rounds of chocolate about 3/4-inch in diameter onto prepared parchment paper.
4. Pipe 6-8 rounds of chocolate – **1 or 2 at a time** - then add toppings to them before they set up.
5. Repeat with remaining chocolate until all of it has been used up.



Makes 3 dozen, depending on the size of the candies.

- Note: You can simply melt your chocolate and still make mendiants with it, but the chocolate will bloom after a little while. Mendiants made with untempered chocolate should be stored in the fridge (to minimize bloom) and eaten quickly, but still make a fun no-fuss snack if you're planning to just munch on them yourself at home.



Aztec Chocolate Bark

New world chocolate bark with semi-sweet chocolate, cinnamon, chili pepper, and toasted pumpkin seeds.

Posted by Garrett McCord of Vanilla Garlic on December 16, 2007

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup of hulled, unsalted pumpkin seeds
- 1/4 teaspoon of cayenne pepper, plus a dash extra
- 3/4 teaspoon of cinnamon, plus a dash extra
- 3/4 teaspoon of ancho chili powder, plus a dash extra
- 12 oz. of bitter or semi-sweet chocolate

PREPARATION

1. Place the pumpkin seeds in a skillet over medium-low heat. Toast the pumpkin seeds for about 5 minutes, they'll pop and jump a bit as they release their oils and moisture. Allow to cool.
2. Melt the chocolate according to the manufacturer's directions. Once melted add the cinnamon, cayenne pepper, ancho chili powder, and most of the pumpkin seeds saving some to decorate the top with.
3. Spread onto a flat baking pan lined with a silpat or wax paper. Sprinkle over and press into the chocolate the last few pumpkin seeds and sprinkle on a dash more of the spices for color and taste. Place in the freezer for 5 minutes or until hardened. Break into pieces and serve or store in the fridge in an airtight container. Best consumed in one or two days.

French Chocolate Cake

from Michelle Chen -

"This is typical of a French homemade cake - dense, dark, and delicious. The texture is very different from a sponge cake, and it is excellent dusted with confectioners' sugar and served with whipped cream."

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup white sugar
- 10 (1 ounce) squares semi-sweet chocolate
- ¾ cup unsalted butter, cubed
- 2 tsps vanilla extract
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- 5 eggs, separated
- ¼ cup sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 TBSP espresso powder
- 1 dash cream of tartar
- salt to taste

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Generously grease a 9½ inch springform cake tin. Dust with a little sugar, and tap out the excess.
2. Set aside 3 TBSPs of the sugar. Place the chocolate, butter, and remaining sugar in a large, heavy-based pan. Cook over moderate heat until the chocolate and butter have melted, and the sugar has dissolved. Remove the pan from heat. Stir in vanilla, and leave the mixture to cool slightly.
3. Beat the egg yolks into the chocolate mixture one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in the flour.
4. In a large bowl, scrupulously clean and grease free, beat the egg whites until foamy. Add cream of tartar and salt, and beat to stiff peaks. Sprinkle reserved sugar over egg whites, and beat until stiff and glossy. Beat 1/3 of the egg whites into the chocolate mixture, then carefully fold in the remaining whites. Carefully pour batter into the prepared tin, and tap the tin gently to release air bubbles.
5. Bake for about 45 minutes to 1 hour, until well risen and a skewer inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. If the cake appears to rise unevenly, rotate after 30 to 35 minutes. If the cake starts to crack or become too brown, place a piece of foil lightly over the top. Transfer the cake to a wire cooling rack, and remove the sides of the springform tin. Cool completely, and then remove the base. Do not attempt to remove the cake before it's completely cooled as this cake is very fragile.