

Chocolate Mousse

Notes on the Mousse

The higher quality the chocolate, the less tolerant this is to inattention, over-beating, cheating and timing. I recommend making this once with cheap chocolate, as it is less prone to seizing and will still taste really good. (but not to-die-for good) that way you'll understand the steps involved and will not be as tense when you're using the good chocolate.

Also, despite the cautions, this doesn't take all that long to make. You can do it!

Notes on Ingredients

Heavy Whipping Cream: Get the highest fat content you can find. Not the cheapo grocery brand unless you happen to know it's high quality.

The Chocolate

You have to look really, really hard to find chocolate without soy lethicin in it. Sadly several formerly high quality chocolates have started adding soy lethicin. If you find chocolate without it, almost by definition, you've found a high quality chocolate.

You should be able to pronounce all the ingredients in your chocolate: cocoa, cocoa butter and not much else. Look to the Belgian or Swiss chocolates.

A note on separating the eggs:

There CANNOT be EVEN A DROP of egg yolk in the egg whites. This means you need three bowls. One for successful egg whites with no yolk, one for the egg yolks and one to use when you're separating an egg. That way if the egg is old and the yolk is runny or what have you, you only need to discard one egg and won't contaminate the successes.

Seized Chocolate

Seized chocolate gets instantly grainy and lumpish. You can try stirring your way out of it, but you're likely to get mousse with an unappealing texture. This actually happened to a friend of mine. It was sad, and she cried.

Ingredients

16 ounces of semi-sweet chocolate, finely chopped or as chips.

2 cups cold heavy whipping cream

6 large eggs, separated

Directions

1. Whip the cream to soft peaks, put aside in a new bowl and refrigerate

2. Melt the chocolate.

You can do this in a double-boiler (over-but-not-in hot but not simmering water). Stirring often. With this method you will almost certainly end up having to wait for the chocolate to cool down to warm.

It's far easier to do this in the microwave:

Put your chocolate in a bowl, and NEVER nuke for LONGER THAN 30 seconds.

Stir. Nuke again for 30 seconds.

Stir and nuke, stir and nuke etc until the chocolate still has a few lumps.

Now, you just stir continuously until the rest of the chocolate melts. It doesn't take long and the chocolate will not be all that hot. Dab some chocolate on your lower lip. It should feel warm but not hot. If it's too cool, the chocolate will seize. Same if it's too hot.

3. Whip the egg whites in a very clean bowl until they are foamy and beginning to hold a shape. Beat until soft peaks form. Soft peaks should fold over and not be rigid.

4. When the chocolate is at the proper temperature, add about 1/4th or less of the whipped cream.

Add the egg yolks. If you don't add the whipped cream first, the chocolate will seize when you add the yolks. (It will also seize if the chocolate is too hot.)

Fold by hand until mixed. Do this fairly quickly because you don't want the chocolate to seize. (Fast, but not too fast!) Too slow and the chocolate will seize.

Gently fold in the rest of the whipped cream. You need the fluffiness, so be gentle.

5. Fold in half the egg whites until just incorporated using a whisk, then fold in the remaining whites, switching to a spatula. Be gentle. There should be no chunks or bits of white, but you need this fluffy so don't over-work.

6. Spoon the mousse into a serving bowl or individual dishes and refrigerate for at least 8 hours.