



HOW TO MAKE

Chocolate Mousse

It's surprisingly simple to prepare this classic, oh-so-decadent dessert. What's hard is not eating it all in one sitting. **BY DABNEY GOUGH**

RICH, INDULGENT, LIGHT AS AIR. Chocolate mousse is all of those things. And given how easy it is to make, it's a dessert that should have prime real estate in your recipe box. With our basic recipe, the right tools, and a little know-how, you'll soon be on your way to sweet success.

cook's tips

1 Knowing when to stop beating your egg whites is key.

Soft peaks barely hold their shape; the peaks flop over when the beaters are lifted. Stiff peaks (like those at right) stand up when the beaters are lifted.

2 For an airy mousse (after all, mousse means foam in French), use a light touch and a large rubber spatula to fold the egg whites and whipped cream into the chocolate.



No cooking class required

Making this classic French dessert is as easy as the tools you need and the tricks you know. Check out our flavor twists to expand your repertoire.

TOOLS

A few standard kitchen utensils are all you'll need:

- 3 bowls
- a skillet
- a large heatproof rubber spatula
- an electric hand mixer or a balloon whisk

TRICKS

Use the best-quality semi-sweet or bittersweet chocolate you can find, preferably with 60 to 62 percent cacao for the smoothest texture and best flavor.

Serve your mousse right away for a slightly looser texture or chill it for a firmer result.

TWISTS

For something a little different, add:

- **Hazelnut:** 3 Tbs. Frangelico.
- **Bourbon:** 1 Tbs. bourbon.
- **Coconut:** ½ cup toasted sweetened coconut (serve immediately to retain texture).

THE BASIC

real chocolate mousse

Serves 4

6 oz. semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, preferably 60% to 62% cacao, chopped

2 Tbs. unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces

3 large egg whites

Pinch of table salt

3 Tbs. granulated sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cold heavy cream

Chocolate shavings for garnish (optional)

Put the chopped chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl and set the bowl in a skillet of barely simmering water. Stir the chocolate with a heatproof spatula just until it is melted. Remove the bowl from the skillet, add the butter to the chocolate, and stir until the butter is completely melted and the mixture is smooth.

In a medium bowl with an electric hand mixer on medium-high speed (or with a balloon whisk), whip the egg whites and salt until they barely hold soft peaks. While whipping, gradually sprinkle in the sugar—go slowly, as adding it too fast may cause the whites to fall. Continue whipping until the whites just start to hold stiff peaks (see photo 1 opposite). Don't overbeat or the dissolved sugar may weep out of the whites.

Wipe the beaters (or whisk) clean and then whip the cream in a large bowl until it's fairly thick and holds a soft peak when the beaters are lifted.

With a large spatula, gently fold about one-third of the egg whites into the chocolate until

the mixture is no longer streaky. Fold in the remaining whites. Scrape the chocolate mixture into the whipped cream. Add a flavoring, if using (see sidebar opposite). Fold gently until the mixture is uniform in color and texture.

Divide among 4 dessert dishes and serve immediately, or refrigerate for at least 30 minutes for a slightly firmer texture. Garnish with chocolate shavings, if using.

Note: The risk of salmonella infection from consuming raw egg whites is low, but the only way to be completely safe is to use pasteurized egg whites.

