

Chocolate Amaretto Truffles

...like the ones Cocolat used to make.

This recipe for soft, intensely flavored chocolate truffles was posted to the **ba.food** newsgroup by **Joe Petolino**, who adapted it from Cocolat founder Alice Medrich's cookbook *Cocolat: Extraordinary Chocolate Desserts*. Joe makes the following additional comments:

Cocolat coated truffles weren't hard and waxy on the outside, because they were coated in untempered chocolate, which melts at a low temperature. You get an intense burst of chocolate flavor as the coating melts in your mouth. That's why they had to be kept refrigerated.

I can tell you that it's surprisingly easy to *make* the coated variety. To simplify the construction, I made them in small cubes, but it's really not much harder to make them round — instead of cutting the filling into squares, just scoop up some filling with a spoon and roll it into a ball.

The recipe is not difficult — there are only four ingredients — but it does require three separate periods of refrigeration for several hours. Read through the entire recipe before you start, making sure that you have enough time to finish all of the steps before you want to serve the truffles.

Use a good quality chocolate, like that sold for baking. Fancy supermarkets sometimes sell irregular chunks of Ghirardelli or Guittard bittersweet chocolate broken from huge 2" (5cm) thick slabs; this is ideal, and reasonably priced. Avoid the temptation to use chocolate chips or candy bars, since their melting properties aren't right for this recipe.

Chocolate Amaretto Truffle Squares

(Makes about 100 small truffles)

2lbs bittersweet chocolate (900 g)
1 cup heavy cream (240 mL)
3 Tbsp. unsalted butter (45 mL)
1/4 cup Amaretto liqueur (60 mL)

Divide the chocolate into two portions: 10 oz. (~300g) for the centers, the rest for the coating. Using a serrated knife, chop both portions of chocolate into small pieces (1/4" = 6mm slices or smaller) so that it will be easier to melt.

To make the centers:

Neatly line a 6" x 10" (15 x 25 cm) baking pan with parchment or waxed paper. Put the 10 oz. (~300g) of chopped chocolate into a bowl. Cut the butter into small pieces, and add it to the bowl. Heat the cream

to a simmer, then add it to the bowl. Stir gently (so as not to whip any air into the mixture — don't use a whisk) until the chocolate is melted and the mixture is uniform. Add the liqueur, and gently stir again until the mixture is uniform. Strain the mixture into the lined baking pan, and refrigerate for four hours. At this point, the pan should contain a slab of firm filling mixture, about 1/2" (13mm) thick. Carefully remove it, paper and all, and cut into squares about 3/4" (19mm) on a side. Peel the squares off of the paper and place them, separated, on a baking sheet lined with parchment or waxed paper. Freeze them for several hours or overnight.

To dip the truffles:

Carefully melt all of the remaining chocolate in a shallow microwaveable pan (*e.g.* a glass pie pan or baking pan); microwave for a few minutes, stopping every 10 seconds or so to stir and (after it melts) to check the temperature. Stop when the temperature reaches the 115-120F (46-49C) range. It's very important that it not go more than a few degrees above 120F/49C, or the texture of the chocolate will be irreversibly ruined — use an instant-read meat thermometer to get an accurate reading (for the same reason, you should avoid getting any water into the melted chocolate).

To dip, arrange your counter space with the tray of frozen centers on the left, the pan of melted chocolate in the middle, and a paper-lined baking sheet on the right. Pick up a frozen center with your left hand and drop it into the chocolate. Use your right hand to scoop melted chocolate over the center, until it's completely covered. Wipe your fingers on the side of the pan to remove excess chocolate, pick up the coated center, flick any excess chocolate back into the pan, and put the coated truffle onto the baking sheet. Try to work quickly so the uncoated centers stay frozen and the pan of chocolate stays melted.

It's recommended that you work in two or more batches, leaving the rest of the uncoated centers in the freezer. If you have to reheat the chocolate, take care once again not to exceed 120F/49C. When all the truffles have been dipped, refrigerate them for a couple of hours before serving. Since they're coated with untempered chocolate, they must remain refrigerated until they're served.