

## The Basic Recipe

This classic truffle is made from a simple bittersweet ganache.



**EVEN EASIER** Instead of coating truffles in melted chocolate, roll just-formed truffles in cocoa powder.

## BITTERSWEET CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

MAKES ABOUT 30

### TRUFFLE BASE

1¼ cups heavy whipping cream

9 ounces high-quality bittersweet chocolate (70% cocoa), chopped, divided

### CHOCOLATE COATING

8 ounces high-quality bittersweet chocolate (70% cocoa), chopped

Unsweetened cocoa powder (optional; for rolling)

**FOR TRUFFLE BASE:** Bring cream to simmer in heavy small saucepan. Remove from heat; cool to lukewarm, 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, stir 7 ounces chocolate in metal bowl over saucepan of simmering water until smooth. Remove from heat. Add 2 ounces chocolate; stir until smooth. Stir in cream. Chill truffle base until firm enough to roll, about 3 hours.

Line rimmed baking sheet with waxed paper. Roll 2 teaspoons truffle base between fingertips into ball. Transfer to prepared sheet. Repeat with remaining truffle base. Chill until firm, about 1 hour.

**FOR CHOCOLATE COATING:** Line another rimmed baking sheet with waxed paper. Stir chocolate in metal bowl over saucepan of simmering water just until melted. Remove from heat. Cool slightly.

Scoop some of warm (not hot) melted chocolate into palm of hand. Place 1 chilled truffle in hand and roll in palm to coat. Transfer to prepared sheet. Repeat with remaining melted chocolate and truffles, rewarming chocolate if necessary.

Roll in cocoa powder if desired. **FOR VARIATIONS**, see page 61 for instructions on rolling in toppings. Chill until firm, about 1 hour. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 week ahead. Store in airtight container and keep chilled. Let stand at room temperature 1 hour before serving. ➤

## The Techniques

### 1. CHOOSING THE CHOCOLATE

Your truffles will only be as good as the chocolate you use to make them. So how do you know if you're choosing a high-quality chocolate?

- **The smell and appearance:** Good chocolate should have a deep chocolaty smell, along with a fruity or a spicy aroma. It should never smell metallic, sour, or overly sweet. Plus, the chocolate bar should look shiny (not matte).

- **The ingredients:** The only ingredients listed on a bittersweet chocolate's label should be cocoa butter, cocoa liquor, lecithin, and vanilla. Avoid chocolates containing oil, which is used as a cheap substitute for cocoa butter.

- **The brand:** Markoff uses her own chocolate, but she also recommends Valrhona, Santander, and Callebaut.

### 2. ROLLING THE TRUFFLE BASE

Start with a well-chilled truffle base (chilled at least three hours), and use your hands as little as possible in the shaping process. Make a sphere by scooping out two teaspoons of truffle base with a mini ice cream scoop (with a release). If you don't have a mini scoop, dig deep into the

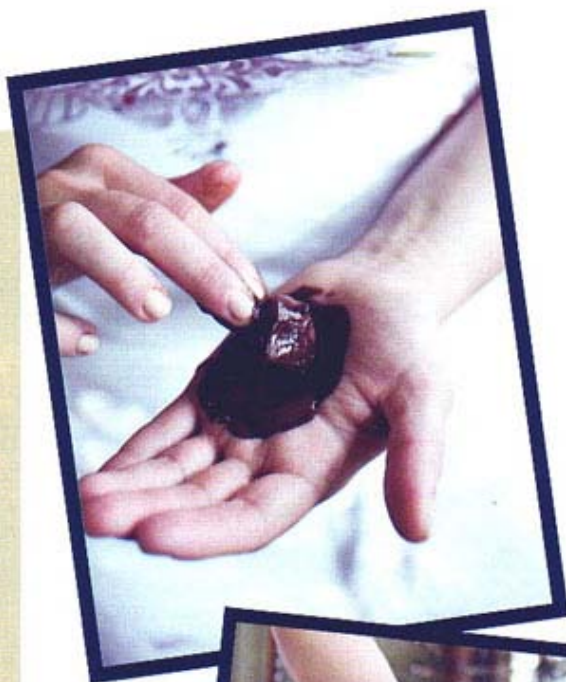
base with a teaspoon-size measuring spoon or melon baller, then turn it in a circle to create a sphere of chocolate. Drop onto a lined baking sheet. Dip the spoon or scoop in warm water to clean it. Finally, smooth out the spheres with your fingertips, which are cooler than your palms.

### 3. DIPPING THE TRUFFLES

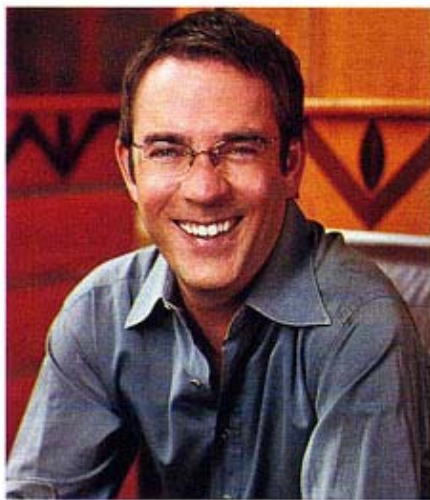
When truffles are coated with too much melted chocolate, an unattractive "foot" of chocolate forms at their base. To prevent this from happening—and make truffle dipping easier—hand roll them in chocolate. First, scoop a little of the melted chocolate into your palm, then roll a truffle around in your palm to coat it with chocolate. When the truffle is uniformly covered in melted chocolate, gently drop it from your palm onto a paper-lined baking sheet.

### 4. PACKAGING AND PRESENTING

Place each truffle in a paper candy cup (available at cookware stores or candy supply stores). Find a low, sturdy box at an import store, florist, or discount store, and fill with truffles in one layer. Attach a note with a key to the flavors and a reminder to refrigerate the truffles. ■



## Contributors



### Ted Allen ▲

The food and wine specialist on *Queer Eye* and a judge on *Iron Chef America*, Allen loves brunch because "it's breakfast—only not so early," he says. "I never get together with friends for breakfast. It's uncivilized—you eat it wearing your

bathrobe and with your hair not done. Brunch, on the other hand, is eminently civilized. It's drinking Mimosas wearing a Ralph Lauren polo shirt."

ENTERTAINING: A VERY MERRY BRUNCH, PAGE 46

### Natalie MacLean

This Ottawa-based wine writer started her current career on a whim: "My husband and I signed up for a wine appreciation course because we thought it would be easier to drink wine than conjugate Spanish verbs after a long workday," she says. That first class led to higher levels of study; wine tours in Europe; freelance writing for Canadian, American, and Australian newspapers and magazines; and the e-newsletter *Nat Decants*. MacLean's first book, *Red, White, and Drunk All Over*, came out in September.

WINE & SPIRITS: CANADIAN ICEWINES, PAGE 78

### Tyler Florence

Now a celebrity chef and the host of three Food Network series, Florence started out washing dishes in his hometown of Greenville, South Carolina. Inspired by that restaurant's chef (who rode a Harley-Davidson and was popular with the ladies), Florence studied culinary arts at Johnson & Wales University in Charleston before moving to New York and working with Charlie Palmer at Aureole and Rick Laakonen at The River Café. His own Manhattan restaurant, Bar Florence, is set to open next year.

HOLIDAY COOKIES, PAGE 116



### Katrina Markoff ▲

Markoff is the founder and chocolatier of Vosges Haut Chocolat—and our 2004 American Food & Entertaining Awards food artisan of the year. She named her exotic truffle and chocolate company after the Parisian square to commemorate an incredible beignet she ate at L'Ambroisie in the Place des Vosges (it had a burst of chocolate ganache in the center). Markoff's newest truffle collection, Groove, came out this fall.

COOKING CLASS: GETTING INTO TRUFFLES, PAGE 57

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