

SOME

## KITCHEN STORIES

*fiction + food*

### Whiskey Truffles

Source: Sally Pasley Vargas | Time: About an hour and a 1/2 | Makes about 30 truffles

#### INGREDIENTS

*For the centers:*

12 ounces bittersweet chocolate (60 to 70% cacao), finely chopped  
2/3 cup heavy whipping cream  
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature  
3 tablespoons whiskey

*For the coating:*

12 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped  
Flavorless vegetable oil  
About 1 cup Dutch process unsweetened cocoa powder

#### TO MAKE THE CENTERS

1. Bring 2 inches of water to a boil in a saucepan that will accommodate a heatproof bowl. Turn off the heat and leave until needed (see step 2.) This is a makeshift (and effective) double boiler. Place the chocolate in the heatproof bowl.
2. Bring the cream to a simmer over medium heat in a small saucepan (or in a Pyrex measuring cup in the microwave.) Pour it over the chocolate and, with a rubber spatula, begin stirring the cream and chocolate together in a small circle at the center of the bowl. Gradually widen the center to incorporate the cream. If bits of chocolate remain, place the bowl over the hot water in the saucepan and stir for 30 seconds. Remove the bowl and stir gently off the heat. Repeat if necessary, until the chocolate is melted. This back and forth on and off the heat allows the chocolate to melt gradually and keeps the mixture creamy.
3. Add the soft butter in tablespoon size pieces and stir until smooth. Add the whiskey one tablespoon at a time, stirring after each addition until incorporated.
4. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 50 to 60 minutes, stirring from time to time, until the mixture is firm but not hard. You will use a small ice cream scoop or melon baller to shape the truffles. If you wish to use a pastry bag, refrigerate the chocolate for less time, until the mixture is a consistency of soft, creamed butter.

## TO SHAPE THE TRUFFLES

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment or wax paper.
2. To use a scoop: When the chocolate is firm (like malleable clay), dip a melon baller, or a small ice-cream scoop in hot water and scoop the chocolate into scant 1-inch balls. Set them on the parchment-lined tray, and if necessary, use the tips of your fingers to press them into truffle-like balls. They do not need to be perfect rounds. (The heat of your palms will warm the chocolate too much, so use your fingers.) Roll in cocoa powder or refrigerate for about 30 minutes and proceed to the next phase if you want to coat them with a thin layer of chocolate first.
3. To use a pastry bag: When the chocolate is creamy (like soft butter) load it into a pastry bag fitted with a 5/8-inch tip. Pipe out the chocolate into 1-inch blobs. If they have little candy-kiss peaks, lightly press them down. Refrigerate for 20 to 30 minutes and when the chocolate is firm but not hard, shape into uneven rounds with the tips of your fingers. Roll in cocoa powder or refrigerate for about 30 minutes and proceed to the next phase if you want to coat them with a thin layer of chocolate first.

## TO COAT THE TRUFFLES WITH UNTEMPERED CHOCOLATE (for a crisp outer shell that preserves the creamy center) *Hint: keep one hand clean while working with the chocolate.*

1. Heat the oven to 200 degrees F, or the lowest setting. Place a dinner plate in the oven to warm. Line a baking sheet with parchment and with a fine-meshed strainer, sift a thin layer of cocoa powder over it. Load the strainer with more cocoa and set it next to the baking sheet.
2. Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over hot water. Stir in about 1 tablespoon (or a little more) vegetable oil to thin the chocolate slightly. The oil helps create a very thin chocolate coating that adds a subtle crispness to the shell when you take a bite of the truffle. (You can re-use leftover chocolate in baking.)
3. Spread a shallow pool of chocolate (about 1/4 cup) on the warmed plate and place 5 or 6 truffle centers on top. With your outspread hand, use a circular motion to roll all the truffles at once in the chocolate. Carefully place each one on the cocoa lined tray and sift some cocoa over the top. Repeat with all the centers. If the chocolate on the plate starts to harden, use your clean hand to return the plate in the oven for about 30 seconds to warm it.
4. When all the truffles are coated and dusted, shake the tray back and forth to completely coat them, sifting them with more cocoa if necessary. Leave to set (10 to 20 minutes), and store the truffles at cool room temperature in a tightly closed tin. They will keep for up to 10 days. They also can be frozen, wrapped in several layers of parchment and then a heavy duty plastic bag, for up to 2 months.
5. Sift and reuse extra cocoa powder. Pour leftover chocolate onto a piece of waxed paper, let it harden and use it in baking.