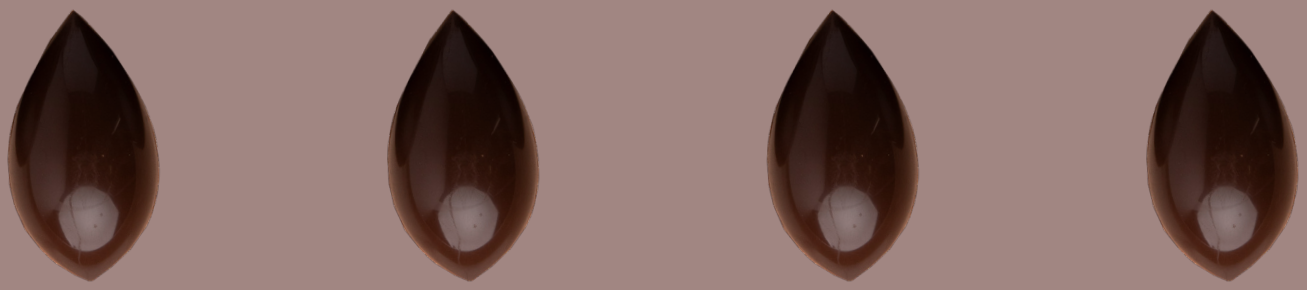
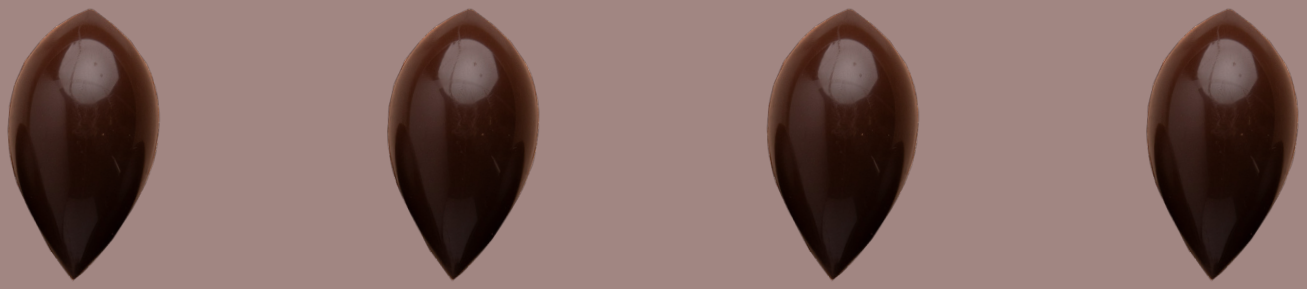


CHAPTER 13-14

BONBONS



MASTERCLASS

BONBONS

"The beauty of chocolate," Chef Dominique notes, "is that you can build something beautiful with it, melt it down again, and give it new life."

CHAPTER REVIEW

The delight of biting into a chocolate bonbon is related to both texture and taste–the clean snap of the outer shell gives way to the smooth, rich ganache filling inside, which you can flavor with any number of fruit purées, herbs, extracts, or spices.

In this chapter, you will learn how to make these fanciful creations, as well as the invaluable technique of tempering chocolate. Tempering is a process in which you melt, cool, then re-warm chocolate to a specific temperature so its fats realign and crystalize in the ideal way to create a smooth, glossy finish and appetizingly snappy texture. Untempered chocolate sets matte, often with white streaks of cocoa butter on the surface (this is called "bloom") and crumbles rather than breaks evenly.

Chef Dominique shares two methods of tempering: The first is called "tabling" and uses a marble slab or other cool surface to cool the chocolate as you move it around with bench scrapers, which helps mix the cooler chocolate touching the marble with the warmer chocolate on the surface, ensuring all the chocolate comes to the proper temperature at the same time (like stirring a sauce in a pot), resulting in an evenly set final product. The second method, called "seeding," uses finely chopped chocolate to cool down already melted chocolate to the proper consistency—like using ice cubes to cool down warm water.

Once you've mastered tempering chocolate, Chef Dominique takes you through the steps for lining your bonbon molds, filling them with ganache, and then sealing them with the final layer of tempered chocolate, called the "foot." Once the bonbons are complete in their molds, it's important to let them cool slowly to room temperature. "Cooling slowly," Chef Dominique notes, "allows for proper crystallization so the bonbon has a smooth, delicate texture." It's another small but important detail in producing excellent-quality chocolates. When you work with so few ingredients, these technical specifics make all the

BONBONS

difference. Once your bonbons are ready, you will unmold them to see their shiny outer shells enveloping the silky smooth ganache filling within.

For the ganache filling, you can choose to keep the flavor plain or learn to incorporate various flavors that complement the chocolate and cut through its richness, like passionfruit and banana, Chef Dominique's favorites. The recipes for both flavors are provided in this workbook.

BONBON BASE: TEMPERED CHOCOLATE SHELL

INGREDIENTS

2 kg (4 lbs 6 ½ oz)
premium-grade chocolate

Tip: You cannot use chocolate chips as they contain stabilizers and are not able to be tempered

EQUIPMENT:

2 rubber spatulas
Ladle
Instant-read thermometer
2 bench scrapers
Sheet pan with ice
Metal bowl
Medium saucepan
Towel

There are two techniques for tempering:

TABLETOP TECHNIQUE FOR TEMPERING

Start with a marble or granite surface, which is clean and dry and doesn't absorb heat. The surface should be cool. If it's not, or if the temperature in your work space is warm, lay a rimmed sheet pan on the marble then fill it with ice. Let the chilled sheet pan rest on the marble for 2 minutes to cool the marble.

Meanwhile, melt the chocolate to the proper temperature. Pour enough water into a medium saucepan to come 1 inch up the side, then bring to a simmer over medium-low heat. Place the chopped chocolate in a metal bowl, then set the bowl over the simmering water. Stir until the chocolate is fully melted and heated to the proper temperature, as indicated below:

Dark chocolate: 118°F (48-50°C)
Milk chocolate: 113°F (45°C)
White chocolate: 109°F (43°C)

When the chocolate is ready, remove the chilled sheet pan, if using, and wipe the marble surface completely dry. Remove the bowl from over the

BONBON BASE: TEMPERED CHOCOLATE SHELL

saucepan and wipe the bottom dry to prevent any condensation from dripping onto the marble surface. Pour 80 percent of the melted chocolate onto the marble and reserve the remaining chocolate in the bowl to the side. Using two bench scrapers, slowly move the chocolate from the center outward to the sides to make a rectangle. Continue scraping the chocolate from the sides inward and back out again; this is also referred to as "agitating the chocolate." Scrape the bench scrapers against each other to clean them as you work.

Watch as the chocolate starts to thicken and develop a gleam. The temperature should be about 84°F (29°C), and the chocolate should feel slightly cool to the touch, as it's just below body temperature. Using the bench scrapers, return the agitated chocolate to the bowl with the remaining melted chocolate and stir gently to combine. The agitated chocolate will reheat slightly as the whole amount comes to the proper temperature. If it doesn't, place the bowl of chocolate over the saucepan and stir continuously with a rubber spatula until the chocolate reaches the proper temperature, as indicated below:

Dark chocolate: 88°F (31°C)
Milk chocolate: 86°F (30°C)
White chocolate: 86°F (30°C)

In your first few times tempering, always make sure to test by dipping an offset spatula or piece of parchment paper into the chocolate to see if it sets shiny. If not, try again with the same chocolate. Once tempered, chocolate must be used immediately. If it solidifies, re-temper.

SEEDING TECHNIQUE FOR TEMPERING

Melt two-thirds of the chocolate that you want to temper.

Finely chop the remaining one-third. Slowly mix one-third of the chopped chocolate into the melted chocolate and stir with a rubber spatula until it's fully melted. Continue adding half the remaining chopped chocolate, stirring until melted, then stir in the remaining chopped chocolate. As you add the chopped chocolate and "seed" the melted chocolate, it will cool. (Think of it like adding ice cubes to a sink full of water.)

The chocolate should be tempered to the proper temperature (see chart above) by the time all the chopped chocolate has been incorporated.

This technique may be faster, but it's less precise. It is a great alternative for smaller kitchens.

FIRE AND WATER

Two things will ruin chocolate and make it unusable.

- If you heat chocolate on its own to over 129°F (54°C), you will burn or scorch it.

- If you wet the chocolate with water or steam while tempering it, the chocolate will seize and turn grainy and pasty. This often happens by condensation dripping onto your work surface from under the bowl of melted chocolate, or the work surface not being completely dry before pouring the melted chocolate over it. Always thoroughly dry any surface or equipment that may come into intact with water to ensure it does not ruin your chocolate.