

Creamy Chocolate Pudding

From America's Test Kitchen episode: *Cool and Creamy Desserts*.

Serves 6

We recommend using one of our favorite dark chocolates-Callebaut Intense Dark Chocolate, L-60-40NV, or Ghirardelli Bittersweet Chocolate Baking Bar. If you like, garnish the pudding with whipped cream and chocolate shavings.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon espresso powder
- 1/2 cup (3 1/2 ounces) sugar
- 3 tablespoons Dutch-processed cocoa
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 large egg yolks
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 2 1/2 cups whole milk
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces
- 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped fine

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Stir together vanilla and espresso powder in bowl; set aside. Whisk sugar, cocoa, cornstarch, and salt together in large saucepan. Whisk in yolks and cream until fully incorporated, making sure to scrape corners of saucepan. Whisk in milk until incorporated.
2. Place saucepan over medium heat; cook, whisking constantly, until mixture is thickened and bubbling over entire surface, 5 to 8 minutes. Cook 30 seconds longer, remove from heat, add butter and chocolate, and whisk until melted and

fully incorporated. Whisk in vanilla mixture.

3. Pour pudding through fine-mesh strainer into bowl. Press lightly greased parchment paper against surface of pudding, and place in refrigerator to cool, at least 4 hours. Whisk pudding briefly and serve.

TECHNIQUE

THE GRITTY TRUTH ABOUT COCOA BUTTER

As we developed our pudding recipe, we found that there was a limit to how much bittersweet chocolate we could add before the texture turned gritty- but that we could continue to add chocolate in the form of cocoa powder without affecting smoothness. Why should this be the case? The culprit in causing grittiness, it turns out, is cocoa butter- and solid chocolate has far more of it than cocoa powder. Chocolate is manufactured so that its fat remains solid at room temperature but literally melts in the mouth. But when melted chocolate is allowed to re-solidify, the crystalline structure of its cocoa butter is reorganized. It becomes more stable and melts at higher-than-body temperature. If present in high enough amounts, this more-stable form of cocoa butter can create the grainy mouthfeel we detected in the pudding.



America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of *Cook's Country* and *Cook's Illustrated* magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to *America's Test Kitchen*

(www.americastestkitchen.com) on public television.