

# Chocolaty Caramel Thumbprints

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| 1 egg  | 2 tablespoons milk                                      |
| 1 cup all-purpose flour                                  | 1 teaspoon vanilla                                      |
| $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder               | 16 vanilla caramels, unwrapped                          |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt                              | 3 tablespoons whipping cream                            |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, softened<br>(photo 1, page 76) | $\frac{1}{4}$ cups finely chopped pecans                |
| $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar                                  | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3 ounces) semisweet chocolate pieces |
|  | 1 teaspoon shortening                                   |

**1** Separate egg; place yolk and white in separate bowls. Cover and chill egg white until needed. In a medium bowl stir together the flour, cocoa powder, and salt. Set aside. In a large mixing bowl beat butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds (photo 2, page 76). Add the sugar. Beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally (photo 3, page 76). Beat in egg yolk, milk, and vanilla until combined (photo 4, page 76). Beat in as much of the flour mixture as you can with the mixer (photo 5, page 76). Using a sturdy rubber scraper or wooden spoon, stir in any remaining flour mixture (photo 6, page 76). Wrap dough in plastic wrap; chill about 1 hour or until easy to handle.

**2** Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a cookie sheet; set aside. In a small heavy saucepan heat and stir caramels and cream over low heat until smooth; set aside. Lightly beat reserved egg white. Shape dough into 1-inch balls (photos 1–3, page 92). Dip balls in beaten egg white, then roll in chopped pecans to coat (photos 1–2, page 94). Place balls about 1 inch apart on the prepared cookie sheet. Press thumb into the center of each ball.

**3** Bake in the preheated oven about 10 minutes or until edges are firm. Remove from oven. If cookie centers puff during baking, re-press with the bowl of a spoon. Spoon about  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon melted caramel mixture into the center of each cookie. (If necessary, reheat caramel mixture to keep it spoonable.) Transfer to a wire rack set over waxed paper and let cool.

**4** In another small heavy saucepan heat and stir chocolate pieces and shortening over low heat until smooth. Let cool slightly. Drizzle melted chocolate over cookies. Let stand until set. Makes about 36 cookies.

Per cookie: 114 cal., 7 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 15 mg chol., 49 mg sodium, 12 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 1 g pro.

