

Chocolate Mousse

Serves 6

1/3 cup sugar

4 large egg yolks

2 cups heavy cream

10 ounces bittersweet or semi-sweet chocolate, melted *

2 teaspoons cognac

Reserve 2 tablespoons of the sugar and combine the rest of the sugar with the egg yolks in a stainless steel bowl. Place the bowl in a skillet of hot tap water (or use a double broiler) and whisk the mixture for 3 minutes, or until its fluffy, smooth, and at least doubled in volume.

Beat the reserved sugar with the cream in a large chilled bowl for a few minutes, or until soft peaks form; do not over whip. Transfer about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the whipped cream to another bowl to use as a decoration and refrigerate.

Using a rubber spatula, combine the melted chocolate and cognac with the yolk mixture. If the mixture starts to seize or break down, immediately stir in 1 to 2 tablespoons of the whipped cream to smooth out the mixture. Gently fold in the (remaining) whipped cream until incorporated. Transfer the mousse to a decorative bowl, cover, and refrigerate until set, at least 2 hours.

At serving time, whip the reserved $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whipped cream until stiff f peak form. Spoon dollops of the cream onto the top of the mousse. Serve.

*Melting Chocolate

Chocolate should be cut into small pieces of about equal size before melting it; the smaller the pieces, the faster they will melt.

To melt chocolate in a microwave oven, put it in a bowl, cover it and microwave it for 1 minute periods, leaving 2 to 3 minute intervals between the microwaving periods, so it does not scorch.

To melt chocolate conventionally, put the chocolate pieces in a stainless steel bowl set over a saucepan of hot water and stir occasionally until the chocolate melts.