

Chocolate Souffle

Makes eight 6-ounce soufflés

NOTE: When beating the egg whites, it is best to start with whites that are at room temperature. Make sure your bowl is very clean and no yolk has gotten into the whites or the whites won't whip.

Unsalted butter, room temperature, for soufflé cups
 2/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, divided
 6 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped into small pieces
 6 large eggs
 ½ teaspoon kosher salt
 2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
 1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F; place a rack in the center of the oven.
2. To prepare the soufflé molds, coat the inside surface of the ramekins with softened butter. Sprinkle the inside of each with 2 tablespoons of sugar, tipping to coat evenly. Set on a rimmed baking sheet.
3. To prepare the soufflé base: Place the chocolate pieces in the top of a double boiler. Place over medium heat and stir until the chocolate melts. Remove from the heat and set aside.
4. Separate eggs, placing the yolks in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and the whites in a large mixing bowl. Add ½ cup sugar and the salt to the egg yolks. Beat on medium-high speed until very light, fluffy, and thick, about 3 to 4 minutes. The mixture should be thick enough that when the paddle attachment is lifted, an egg yolk “ribbon” falls that takes 3 to 4 seconds to dissolve. Set aside.
5. Stir the cream and vanilla into the melted chocolate, and transfer to a large mixing bowl. Stir 1/3 of the egg yolk mixture into the chocolate mixture. Fold the remaining egg yolk mixture into the chocolate in 2 additions. Set aside.
6. Using a stand mixer fitted with a wire whip attachment, beat the egg whites on medium speed until fluffy but not stiff, about 3 to 4 minutes. Sprinkle in the remaining tablespoon of sugar, and beat for 1 minute on medium speed until the whites are shiny and firm but not stiff. (Beaten whites should form a soft peak when the wire whip is lifted.)
7. Stir a third of the egg white mixture into the chocolate mixture. Gently fold in the remaining egg whites in 2 additions.
8. Divide the chocolate mixture evenly between the prepared soufflé molds. (At this point you can refrigerate the soufflés for several hours before baking, but they will require an additional 5 to 8 minutes of baking time.) Transfer the mold-filled baking sheet to the oven and bake until the soufflés are puffed and cracked on top, about 15 to 17 minutes. Serve warm.

Recipe courtesy of Sur La Table Chef Lynne Just

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