

Chocolate-covered Strawberry Cordials

(almost like Gimbels used to make!)

Ingredients:

10 Strawberries, undamaged and only slightly under-ripe; not too large
2 ounces mini-marshmallows (fresher are better)
1½ to 2 teaspoonfuls water
1 cup powdered sugar
2 bags, 12 ounces each, milk chocolate chips

Dark chocolate is not recommended. The semi-sweet chocolate will make a harder coating than milk chocolate. Then the berries may break in your hand when you try to eat them.

Instructions:

1. Wash berries in water (with a little splash of vinegar). Allow to dry on paper towels. (It's very important not to mix water with the chocolate, so be sure they are dry.)
2. Make room in the refrigerator for a pan large enough to hold the dipped berries. Line the pan with waxed paper.
3. Put marshmallows and 1½ teaspoonfuls of water in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave in 15 second increments till melted and smooth. Stir in about half of the powdered sugar.
4. Turn out the marshmallow mixture onto a work surface dusted with powdered sugar. Dust your hands with powdered sugar and knead in the rest of the powdered sugar to make a fondant dough. It should be pliable and not too sticky. If it's too dry and tears, add last ½ teaspoonful of water. If very sticky, add a little more powdered sugar.
(Thanks to Nadiya Hussein from the Great British Baking Show for the idea!)
5. Roll out fondant, about ⅓ at a time, into a *thin* layer. Cut a piece to cover the top of the berry (where the green leaves will be cut off). Don't make the piece so big it would cover the whole berry.
6. Melt one bag of chocolate chips in a heat-proof bowl over 1 inch of water simmering in a saucepan (like a double-boiler set up).
7. Being careful not to cut yourself, use a small paring knife to remove the top of the berry where the leaves are.
Suggestion from Jacques Pepin: Put your thumb on the side of the paring knife blade near the tip. The knife-tip won't easily go in farther than that.
8. Quickly cover the cut top of the berry in fondant. *(The sugar in the fondant will start the berries making juice. If the berries start to "sweat" before you can cover them all in chocolate, roll them in a pinch of powdered sugar so the juice doesn't make the chocolate seize.)*
9. Dip or cover the berry with chocolate and set it on the waxed paper. If you used a fork to hold the berry, it may leave holes. Be sure to touch up any holes with chocolate so the berry is *completely* covered. Repeat fondant and chocolate until all the berries are done.
10. Chill the berries in the refrigerator until the chocolate is solid.
11. Melt the second bag of chocolate chips as before. Re-cover all the berries in a second coat of chocolate. Chill until solid.
12. Wait about 24 hours before you eat them.
It will drive you crazy waiting, I know!
13. Store them in the fridge and eat promptly. They don't store for very long — but then, that's never been a problem at my house.

Next time, I'm going to try making a small chocolate disk at the bottom, topping it with the fondant, putting the berry cut side down on the fondant, then drizzle the berry until it's covered by the chocolate.