

Welcome to “Easy, Edible Gifts for Chocolate Lovers,” a Sno-Isle Libraries virtual baking class with Chef Cam Zarcone

Discover how easy it is to make homemade Chocolate Truffles, along with a scrumptious batch of the chocolate-caramel Brazilian candies Brigadeiros—all perfect for tucking into a gift box and presenting to a special someone.

Chocolate Truffles

Classic French truffles are simple but endlessly adaptable treats that date back more than a century. They’re also a great introduction to *ganache*, a simple mixture of chocolate and cream easily transformed into candies like these as well as various glazes and frostings.

Makes about 14 to 16

To prepare ganache:

4 ounces ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) heavy cream

5 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, in chip form or cut into small pieces

On the stovetop, or in a microwave-proof bowl, heat cream until steaming. Pour cream over chocolate and use a small whisk or spatula to combine thoroughly. Add optional flavoring if desired. Chill mixture until firm enough to handle, about 1 to 2 hours.

Optional ideas for flavoring the ganache:

- Add homemade raspberry purée: In a small or medium saucepan, bring 10 ounces fresh or frozen raspberries and 2 tablespoons granulated sugar to a simmer over medium high. Cook for about 3 minutes, stirring frequently, until juices are mostly evaporated. Use a sturdy spatula to force raspberry purée through a fine-mesh strainer. Note: This recipe will yield about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. Use about half this amount (2 tablespoons) to flavor the amount of chocolate and heavy cream listed above.
- Add 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon finely chopped crystallized ginger.
- Steep 1 Earl Grey teabag in the warmed cream before adding chocolate to create an EarlGrey flavored ganache.

To finish truffles:

Use a spoon to scoop up about 1 tablespoon of ganache. Roll into a ball, then roll in topping of choice. Note: Truffles can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days but taste best if allowed to come to room temperature before eating.

Ideas for coating the truffles:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- Confectioners’ sugar mixed with a small amount of cinnamon (start with a ratio of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup confectioners’ sugar to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon; taste and add more cinnamon if desired)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cocoa nibs

- ¼ cup finely chopped nuts or coconut, toasted or untoasted (To toast nuts or coconut: Preheat oven to 350° F. Spread unchopped nuts, or shredded unsweetened coconut, in a thin layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Toast to desired level, about 5 to 10 minutes for nuts and about 5 to 8 minutes for coconut. Allow nuts to cool before chopping.)

Brigadeiros

These delicious little Brazilian treats are sort of a cross between a caramel and a chocolate truffle.

Makes about 24

For the candies:

2 teaspoons unsalted butter (plus extra for greasing your hands)

1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk

5 tablespoons (¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon) unsweetened cocoa powder

1/8 teaspoon salt

For finishing the candies after they're cooked:

Sprinkles, extra cocoa powder, or unsweetened shredded coconut (toasted or untoasted; toasting instructions included in Chocolate Truffles recipe above) for coating candies once they're shaped.

Have on hand a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Place topping(s) of your choice in a bowl or spread on a small plate and set aside.

In a medium saucepan, melt the butter over low heat. Whisk in the condensed milk, cocoa powder, and salt.

Turn the heat up to medium and use a wooden spoon or heatproof spatula to stir the mixture constantly for about 7 minutes. (You'll know the candy is done when it becomes thick and shiny and pulls away from the bottom of the pan when you drag the spoon across it.)

Scrape all of the mixture onto the parchment-lined sheet pan and spread in a thin layer.

Once mixture is cool enough to handle, roll a tablespoon or so of the mixture into a ball or shape into a cube, then roll it in your topping. (Note: If mixture seems too sticky to work with, greasing your hands with butter will help.) Repeat with remaining mixture.

Brigadeiros recipe adapted from cooking.nytimes.com

About the Instructor

Cam Zarcone teaches all sorts of cooking classes (many of them through the local grocery chain PCC) around greater Seattle to cooks of all ages and abilities. She also offers up all kinds of inspired cooking-with-kids projects in her Substack newsletter, *Homeschool Culinary Arts* (homeschoolculinary.substack.com). You can follow her on Instagram @hummingbirdculinary.