

Magic Chocolate Ice Cream

With just 10 minutes of work, we made creamy chocolate ice cream without an ice cream machine. Yes, we're serious. BY LYNN CLARK

AN ICE CREAM MAKER turns up in just about every wedding registry. The young couples envision themselves churning out batches of creamy homemade ice cream. But once the honeymoon is over, most machines wind up in the back of a closet. It's easy to see why. Few people can remember to freeze the insert ahead of time. If your freezer doesn't get cold enough, neither will the insert, and the ice cream machine won't work. Many recipes use a fussy French egg custard that must be cooked, strained, cooled, and chilled before churning. Could we make really good ice cream—with intense chocolate flavor and lush texture—without the machine or the hassle?

Ice cream makers work by incorporating air, which reduces ice crystals and helps ensure a smooth, creamy texture. Recipes I tried that called for simply freezing a mixture of melted chocolate, cream, and sugar were more like frozen truffles than ice cream. Other recipes incorporated air by freezing the mixture and then stirring it every 30 minutes for hours; this was tedious, to say the least. I found one recipe based on semifreddo (an Italian dessert) that called for folding whipped egg whites or whipped cream into an egg yolk base, but it tasted too light and icy. I also considered the old summer camp method in which a small coffee can is filled with cream, sugar, and chocolate syrup and set inside a larger coffee can filled with rock salt and ice; the entire contraption is then shaken vigorously for 30 minutes. This requires cans, rock salt, and a crew of campers willing to shake, rattle, and roll. Puh-lease!

Things began looking up when I found a recipe that used sweetened condensed milk in place of cream. I added chopped semisweet chocolate to the condensed milk, melted the mixture in the microwave, and then froze it. In the freezer, the condensed milk maintained its velvety texture. Unfortunately, its cloying sweetness overpowered the chocolate. Thinking about the semifreddo, I tried folding in whipped cream to lighten the mixture. After several hours, I pulled my

container from the freezer and found dense, creamy chocolate ice cream with a luscious texture that rivaled any I'd ever made in a machine. But while the texture hit the mark, the flavor was sickly sweet and barely tasted of chocolate.

I tried replacing semisweet chocolate with unsweetened. That cut the sweetness but—alas—spoiled the texture. Because unsweetened chocolate (and cocoa powder, which I also tried) have more cocoa solids than semisweet chocolate, they made the ice cream chalky. Next, I tried using equal parts of unsweetened and white chocolate (which has no cocoa solids). Although this did lighten the ice cream, the white chocolate masked the dark chocolate flavor. Bittersweet chocolate, which has slightly less sugar than semisweet, worked best in maintaining the texture, but tasters continued to find the ice cream too sweet and the chocolate flavor lacking.

In the test kitchen, we often add instant coffee granules to heighten chocolate flavor. The note of bitterness intensifies the chocolate without making it taste like a cup of coffee. Not only did the coffee enhance the chocolate, the ice cream—balanced by the coffee—tasted less sweet. A pinch of salt and a little vanilla extract rounded out the flavor of this mousselike, ultra-rich, full-on chocolate dessert. As a final test, we tasted our ice cream against some premium commercial brands: Ours won hands down.

EASY CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM

Makes 1 quart

If you plan to store the ice cream for more than a few days, place plastic wrap directly on its surface before freezing.

- 1 teaspoon instant coffee or espresso powder
- 1 tablespoon hot water
- 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped fine
- ½ cup sweetened condensed milk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch salt
- 1½ cups cold heavy cream



This homemade ice cream is so rich, creamy, and easy to make that you may never buy the supermarket stuff again.

1. MELT CHOCOLATE BASE Combine coffee (or espresso) powder and hot water in small bowl. Let stand until coffee dissolves, about 5 minutes. Microwave chocolate, sweetened condensed milk, and coffee mixture in bowl, stirring every 10 seconds, until chocolate is melted, about 1 minute. Stir in vanilla and salt. Let cool.

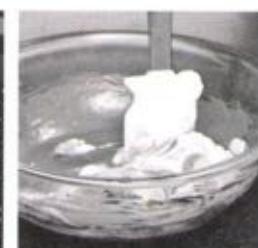
2. MIX AND FREEZE With electric mixer on medium-high speed, whip cream to soft peaks, about 2 minutes. Whisk third of whipped cream into chocolate mixture. Fold remaining whipped cream into chocolate mixture until incorporated. Freeze in airtight container until firm, at least 6 hours or up to 2 weeks. Serve.

STEP-BY-STEP No Machine, No Churning, No Fuss

Follow these steps for chocolate ice cream that's incredibly easy—and delicious.



1. Skip the double boiler. Start by microwaving the chocolate, coffee, and condensed milk until the chocolate is melted.



2. Skip the ice cream machine. For fluffy texture that mimics churned ice cream, gently fold in whipped cream.



3. Skip the stirring. Simply pour the mixture into a container and freeze for at least six hours.