

Maine Arts Camp

How to Temper Chocolate

You Need:

- At least 1 pound of chocolate
- Chocolate thermometer
- Microwave
- Microwave-safe glass bowl
- Rubber spatula

Tempering Steps:

1. Select your chocolate. It is best to use at least 1 pound of chocolate, as it is easier to temper (and retain the temper) of larger amounts of chocolate. If this is more than you need, you can always save the extra for later use. Choose a chocolate that you enjoy eating, and that does not contain any solid mix-ins like fruit or nuts. It's easiest to temper dark chocolate, so if this is your first time, I recommend using dark chocolate, without any milk solids. Once you get the hang of it, you can experiment with milk chocolate or white chocolate. Make sure that the chocolate you start with is in good temper, meaning it is shiny and hard. If it has white or gray streaks or is crumbly, it is not a good chocolate to use with this method of tempering. Also avoid chocolate chips, which are much more difficult to temper.
1. Chop three-quarters of your chocolate. Separate out about a quarter of your chocolate, and set it aside for now. Chop the remaining three-quarters of the chocolate into small pieces, and place them in a microwave-safe bowl.
2. Melt your chocolate. Microwave the bowl of chopped chocolate in 30-second increments. Stir after every 30 seconds, and heat and stir until the chocolate is entirely melted and smooth.
1. Bring the chocolate to 115 degrees Fahrenheit (46 C) for dark chocolate or 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43 C) for milk or white chocolate. Once the chocolate is melted, take its temperature with the chocolate thermometer. If it is not at 115 F, heat it in short bursts until

it reaches that temperature, but watch it carefully. Do not allow the chocolate to exceed its recommended temperature or it might thicken, become hard to work with, or even scorch.

2. Add the remaining chunk of chocolate to the bowl of melted chocolate, and stir gently to incorporate. Stir almost constantly to melt the big chunk. I like to use an almost scraping motion against the block of chocolate, to incorporate it into the melted chocolate. The warm chocolate will melt the chopped chocolate, and the newly added chocolate will bring down the temperature of the warm chocolate.
 3. Cool the chocolate to 90 F (32 C) for dark chocolate or 87 F (30 C) for milk or white chocolate. Continue to stir the chocolate while it cools, until you reach the prescribed temperature.
 4. Test the chocolate's temper. Smear a small spoonful of chocolate on a piece of parchment or waxed paper, and watch it to see if it sets. Properly tempered chocolate should begin to set in just a few minutes. You will first see it lose its shine and take on a slightly more matte look, then it will start to set around the edges. At cool room temperature, a streak of tempered chocolate should set within four to six minutes. If it doesn't appear to be tempered, continue to stir and cool the chocolate for another one to two degrees, then test it again. Different brands of chocolate and different environmental conditions sometimes require slightly different tempering temperatures.
1. Remove any chunks of chocolate in the melted chocolate. If the block of melted chocolate has not melted away entirely, remove it from the melted chocolate so that it does not continue to cool down the chocolate too quickly.
 2. Your chocolate is tempered and ready! You can now use your chocolate for dipping truffles or making barks, clusters, or candy bars.

Tempering Tip

To use tempered chocolate, you must keep it warm but not hot, ideally in the 85-88 F degree range for dark chocolate (86 degrees for milk and white chocolate). You can either keep it over a pan of warm (but not simmering) water, stirring occasionally or try placing it on an electric heating pad set to "low," with a towel between the pad and the bowl. Whichever method you choose, it's important to stir often so that the chocolate remains a uniform temperature throughout and to keep an eye on the temperature.

An infrared (laser) surface thermometer is also handy for tempering. This gives you an excuse to buy a new toy!