

CHOCOLATE

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Press a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface of this pastry cream, then set the bowl in the ice water. Once the cream has completely cooled, use or store in the refrigerator until needed.

9. Spoon the pastry cream into the (cleaned and dried) pastry bag or another gallon-sized plastic bag with a small corner cut out and fitted with an elongated, thin tip or a ¼-inch tip. If using the long, thin tip, insert it into one of the short ends of an éclair as far as it will go. Squeeze firmly as you slowly pull the tip out of the pastry, filling the cavity with the pastry cream. If using the plain tip, insert it into 2 evenly spaced places in the bottom of the éclair, squeezing firmly to fill the center of the pastry. Repeat to fill the remaining éclairs.

10. Place the chocolate in a small bowl large enough to accommodate an éclair, which is about 4 inches long. Bring the cream to a boil in a small saucepan. Immediately pour it over the chocolate and let the mixture sit for 1 minute. Stir until the mixture is completely blended and smooth. Cool for 10 minutes.

11. Turn the éclairs upside down, dip the top of each one halfway into the chocolate glaze and let the excess drip back into the bowl. Set right side up on a serving platter and allow 30 minutes for the glaze to set.

Per serving: 182 calories; 13 g fat; 7 g saturated fat; 100 mg cholesterol; 4 g protein; 14 g carbohydrate; 7 g sugar; 1 g fiber; 63 mg sodium; 38 mg calcium.

CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE

Yield: 8 servings

- 3 eggs, separated
- 1 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour or 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons comstarch
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups milk, scalded
- 2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 baked (9-inch) pie crust
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla, divided
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slightly beat the egg yolks; set aside.
2. In a medium pot over medium heat, mix together 2/3 cup of the sugar, flour and salt; gradually stir in milk and chocolate and cook until chocolate melts and mixture thickens, about 10 minutes. Stir a very small amount into the egg yolks; stir another very small amount into the yolks, and keep adding and stirring until the eggs are hot (you will have added about ¼ of the milk mixture). Gradually pour the yolks back into the thickened milk and cook 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add butter and 1 teaspoon of the vanilla and cool slightly; pour through a fine-mesh strainer into baked pie crust.
3. Combine egg whites, the remaining ½ teaspoon vanilla and cream of tartar in a large bowl and beat to stiff peaks. Gradually beat in the remaining 1/3 cup sugar. Spread this meringue on top of the pie and bake until delicately brown, about 15 minutes. Cool on a wire rack and then chill in refrigerator.

Per serving: 342 calories;

15 g fat; 7 g saturated fat; 83 mg cholesterol; 7 g protein; 46 g carbohydrate; 32 g sugar; 1 g fiber; 288 mg sodium; 86 mg calcium.

RASPBERRY MACAROONS IN CHOCOLATE SHELLS

Yield: 16 pieces

- 2 cups dried, sweetened, flaked coconut
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 large egg white
- Pinch of coarse salt
- ½ cup fresh raspberries
- 6 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil (or corn syrup if not observing Passover)
- Toasted walnuts, toasted coconut, sanding sugar, colored sugar, fleur de sel, etc., for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine coconut, granulated sugar, egg white and salt in a food processor and pulse until just combined, scraping down sides of bowl if necessary. Add raspberries and pulse until just incorporated (do not over-process).
2. Scoop mounds of coconut mixture 1 inch apart onto a parchment-lined baking sheet, using a ½-ounce (1¼-inch) ice cream scoop or a tablespoon to form small mounds.
3. Bake until macaroons are lightly golden, 28 to 30 minutes, rotating baking sheet halfway through cooking. Transfer macaroons to a wire rack and let cool.
4. Place chocolate in a bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water and stir until melted. Add coconut oil or corn syrup, stirring until

combined, then remove from heat.

5. Dip bottoms of macaroons in chocolate or completely cover with chocolate (a flexible spatula will help with this), transferring as dipped to a wax-paper-lined baking sheet. Garnish as desired while still warm, then refrigerate until firm, at least 30 minutes and up to 1 day. Serve chilled.

Per serving: 126 calories; 8 g fat; 6 g saturated fat; no cholesterol; 1 g protein; 15 g carbohydrate; 12 g sugar; 2 g fiber; 45 mg sodium; 6 mg calcium.

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE CAKE

Yield: 12 servings

- For the meringue
- 3 egg whites
- 2 cups powdered sugar, sifted

- For the mousse
- 4 ounces semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 5 eggs, separated
- 2 sticks (1 cup) plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder, preferably Dutch process

Note: The meringue should be made a day in advance.

1. For the meringue: Preheat the oven to 150 degrees (see step 4 if your oven does not get that low). Line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, whisk the egg whites until they form soft peaks. Very slowly, add the powdered sugar and continue whisking until doubled in volume.
3. Place the meringue in a

pastry bag fitted with a plain tip. On the baking sheet, working from the center outward, pipe a continuous coil of meringue to a diameter of 7 inches (it helps to measure out the 7 inches in advance). Bake for 10 hours, until crisp and dry. Skip to step 5.

4. If you cannot heat your oven to as low as 150 degrees, preheat it to 250 degrees. Make the meringue as directed. Put it into the oven and immediately lower the temperature to 200 degrees. Bake 1½ hours, then turn off the heat but leave the meringue in the oven overnight.

5.To make the mousse: Line an 8-inch round cake pan with parchment paper.

6. Melt the chocolate in a stainless steel bowl set over a pot of simmering water. Remove from the heat and whisk in the egg yolks one at a time. Set the mixture aside and keep warm.

7. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, whip the butter and slowly add the cocoa powder until thoroughly incorporated. Add the chocolate and egg yolk mixture and mix well. Set aside.

8. In a clean bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, whip the egg whites until they form soft peaks (you can also do this by hand). With a rubber spatula, gently fold the egg whites into the chocolate mixture, one-third of the whipped whites at a time.

9. Place the mousse in a pastry bag fitted with a plain tip and pipe the mixture into the cake pan. Fill the pan half full. Lay the meringue disc on top and gently press into place. Pipe the remaining chocolate mixture into the pan, allowing it to fill in around the sides of the meringue. Chill for 2 hours.

10. To serve, run a warm paring knife around the inside rim of the pan to loosen the cake and invert it onto a serving tray. Carefully remove the parchment paper and dust with unsweetened cocoa powder.

— Adapted from a recipe by Patrick O’Connell in “The Inn at Little Washington Cookbook.” Higher-temperature adaptation by Alex Hitz in House Beautiful.

HALLOWEEN CANDY BARK

Yield: 10 servings

- 20 ounces milk chocolate
- 15 pieces or packs of assorted Halloween candy, about 1 to 1½ cups

1. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil, smoothing out any creases. Cut the candy bars into pieces. Set aside.
2. Create a double boiler by suspending a glass or metal bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, making sure the bowl doesn’t touch the water. Add milk chocolate and stir until melted and smooth. Do not overheat the chocolate.
3. Remove the bowl from the pan. Pour the melted chocolate onto the prepared baking sheet, using an offset or rubber spatula to spread it into a 10-by-12-inch oblong, about ¼-inch thick. Press the candy pieces into the chocolate, arranging them so each bite has a mix of flavors, colors and textures. Refrigerate the chocolate for 1 hour to completely set before breaking it into large pieces. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for 1 to 2 weeks.

— Recipe by Michelle Buffardi, via Cooking Channel

GARDEN

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Water when soils begin to dry; maintain a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch.

- For the fall garden, sow seeds

of collards, kale, sweet corn and summer squash as earlier crops are harvested.

- Boysenberries and blackberries are ripening now.
- Apply a second spray to trunks of peach trees for peach borers.

- Peach varieties are ripening now.
- Set out broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower transplants for the fall garden.
- Dig potatoes when the tops die. Plant fall potatoes by Aug. 15.
- Keep cukes well-watered.

Drought conditions cause bitter fruit.

- Sow seeds of carrots, beets, turnips and winter radishes for fall harvest.
- Harvest onions and garlic when the tops turn brown.

• Try covering cukes and squash with lightweight floating row covers to minimize insect damage.

If you have garden questions or comments, please write to greengardencolumn@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!

OLYMPICS

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I spent time with a wonderful young woman, who was a former co-worker who was attending UCLA law school. We danced at a club at Hollywood and Vine. It was a great two weeks.

Seoul, 1988

My first trip outside the continental United States, I found Seoul a wondrous hive of activity, sometimes chaotically so.

After getting my credentials at the Main Press Center, I climbed into the front seat of a cab for the short ride to where we were staying. Two journalists from Zambia were in the back.

Off we went. And went. Through a maze of streets, up and up a hill through the dark night.

“This is not right,” one of the Zambians said.

I kept trying to get the driver’s attention. We went through a long tunnel guarded on each side by military men wielding machine guns.

Finally, finally, the cab driver pulled over. I got him to realize the error of his ways. He got a panicked look on his face, spun the cab around and retraced his steps.

When we finally arrived, after something like two hours of what should have been at most a 15-minute trip, the driver got bent out of shape because I refused to pay for the long ride, only for what it should have been.

When the Seoul Games ended, our boss arranged for a party on a large boat. Everyone drank and made merry as the boat sailed up and down the Han River. Once the boss commandeered the vessel, ordering it to shore for more beer.

We ended the night gathered astern singing the “Gilligan’s Island” theme.

Barcelona, 1992

I wasn’t even supposed to be in Barcelona but was added at the last minute because a colleague’s wife was about to give birth. So he stayed home while I flew to Spain (a trip that included a

7-hour layover in Frankfurt).

I didn’t cover track, except for one night (Kevin Young’s 400-meter gold medal). The rest of the time I was sentenced to work inside our Olympic bureau, an awful place where tension from the boss ran high.

One day he sent a local underling off to find Chinese food (yes, in Barcelona). The kid was gone an eternity and the boss was ranting about losing that money. After about eight hours, the kid returned with the Chinese food and even gave the boss the change.

Atlanta, 1996

I was staying in a downtown motel and late one night I was talking to my wife on the phone. CNN was on the TV with the sound down. I noticed ambulances and police cars on the screen.

Then I heard them screaming past my window en route to the site of the fatal explosion at Centennial Olympic Park. I checked in but with AP’s army of reporters, I wasn’t needed.

Besides, I was due at the track at 7 a.m.

Sydney, 2000

My favorite Olympics, which followed a fabulous pre-Olympic trip to Australia’s north coast. The Games themselves went smoothly, with crowds exceeding 100,000 to watch track and field.

The people were unfailingly nice. One even tracked me down to return a cellphone I’d left on a train.

The media stayed in a former mental asylum (appropriately enough) with a beer garden that got more raucous as the night wore on. A couple of kangaroos greeted us at the

entrance of the compound.

Athens, 2004

How can you top two weeks in a resort room on the island of Crete with a balcony overlooking the Mediterranean?

I was embedded with the U.S. track team at its pre-Olympic training camp, trying to dig up stories every day to justify the expense.

Later I told my boss that I’d never have another assignment like that again. “You’re right,” she said.

Beijing, 2008

My final Olympics, and I almost didn’t make it.

I had checked in to our hotel at the U.S. Olympic Trials

in Eugene.

Overnight, I became very ill and was taken by a colleague to the emergency room. A few hours later, I underwent emergency surgery.

I missed the Trials and was sidelined for a month. I still made it to Beijing, where factory shutdowns and traffic restrictions led to the first blue sky residents had seen in years.

Bob Baum retired last year after 43 years with The Associated Press, the first 23 in Portland and the final 20 as a senior sports writer based in Phoenix, Arizona. He and his wife, Leah, live in Island City with their four cats and two dogs.

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