

MINT CHOCOLATE FILLING

Ganache is basically chocolate mixed with cream. Ganache may be flavored with an extract or an oil, or whatever you can infuse into a melted cream-and-chocolate mixture. The amount of heavy cream in a ganache depends on how you will use the confection. This mint-chocolate ganache will be cooled completely, whipped then piped, thus it has more heavy cream compared to a ganache that will not be whipped.

Macarons filled with this whipped ganache will be ready in 48 hours if you place the filled macs directly in the refrigerator. Because this ganache is much softer than an unwhipped ganache, you should keep these macs in the fridge until 10 minutes prior to serving.

If you fill then immediately freeze the macarons, the macaron discs will absorb some moisture in the freezer; it will not take as long to mature in the fridge. The macarons will be slightly softer when removed from the freezer, but it will not be ready for at least another 24 hours.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

4 oz. Dove dark chocolate squares (found in the bagged candy aisle)

Set 2

¼ tsp. peppermint OIL (a flavored oil is stronger than the flavored extract so don't be tempted to add more oil)

Set 3

¾ c. heavy whipping cream or heavy cream (not regular "whipping cream")

2 tsp. light corn syrup

Set 4

1 T. unsalted butter, cubed, room temp.

Tools: *medium bowl, 1-cup measuring pitcher, whisk, rubber spatula, electric hand beater, 9 x 13 metal baking dish*

DIRECTIONS

1. Finely chop the chocolate and place into the bowl.
2. Measure ¾ cup of heavy cream into the measuring pitcher. Add the light corn syrup to the cream.
3. Heat the cream and syrup in the microwave until it just begins to boil.
4. Pour the peppermint oil over the chopped chocolate.
5. Stir the cream and corn syrup in the pitcher then pour the mixture over the hot chocolate and oil. Let sit for 2 minutes.
6. Gently combine the mixture with a whisk.
7. Add the unsalted butter and incorporate with a rubber spatula. Stir the chocolate until the butter melts, scraping the sides of the bowl as well.
8. Set aside to cool.
9. To cool more quickly, pour the ganache into a very clean 9 x 13 metal baking dish and set aside for 10 minutes. Stir the ganache with the rubber spatula then set aside. Continue to stir gently every 10 minutes until the ganache is completely cool and at room temperature.
10. Beat the ganache on low speed for 1 minute. Increase the speed to medium and beat just until the ganache reaches the stiff peak stage. Stiff peak means that when you turn off the beater and lift the beaters out of the ganache, the little mountains that form should maintain a pointed top. The last 1/8 inch of the peak may gently curve over, but if most of the mountain falls to the side, it's still at the soft peak stage.

11. Be careful that you do not over beat the ganache so check the peaks once you can see that the thick liquid ganache is looking like soft cake frosting.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of PaulaQ.com.