

The LOVE Cocoa....

February 14th, 2011

Recipe: **Cocoa Blocks**



For a truly spectacular cupful of rich Hot Chocolate, ditch the commercial powdered packets and make your own soft, fudgy cocoa blocks to stir into hot milk. With only four ingredients, two of them chocolate, this recipe will change your view of winter's favorite beverage forever.

Sooooo... Let's make some **Cocoa Blocks**:

Place in a medium-sized saucepan:

- ½ cup heavy cream
- 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk (1 1/4 cups)

Stir until they start to come together smoothly.





Measure out your chocolate: In a separate bowl, measure out 3/4 cup unsweetened baking chocolate **NOTE:** This is one recipe where chocolate chips will work beautifully as the lecithin in the chips will help the blocks firm up. You'll need 3 cups semisweet or bittersweet chocolate (chopped chocolate bars or chips).



Heat the cream/milk mixture over medium heat until it starts to steam and has a good amount of bubbles around the edges.



Remove from the heat and add the chocolate. First the semisweet or bittersweet chips...



...and then the unsweetened.
Mix the chocolate until it's submerged in the hot cream,
then leave to stand for about 10 minutes.

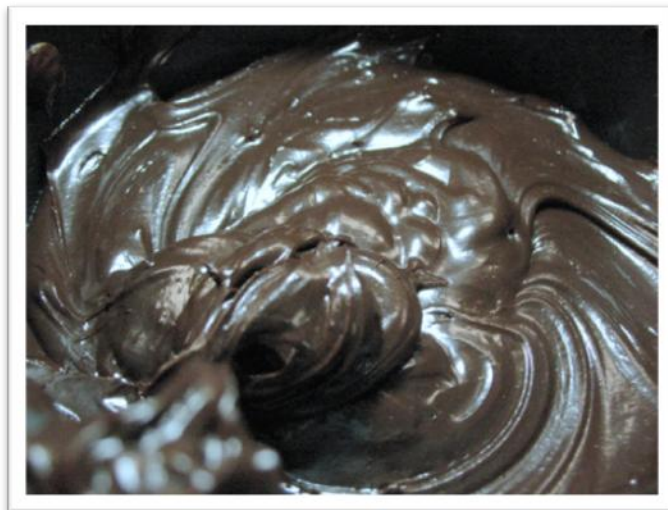


Return the pan to low heat and stir to ensure that the chocolate is all melted.



Switch to a whisk and whisk vigorously.

Now it the time to add any flavorings, such as vanilla, coffee, or another extra-strong flavoring; Irish Crème and peppermint are big favorites I've found.



The mixture will become thick and glossy.

If you've made fudge before, this will look familiar to you.

Pour the chocolate-y goodness into a parchment-lined 8" square pan. Allow to set up overnight at room temperature before cutting.





Use the parchment paper to help you remove the big block from the pan,
then slice with a sharp knife into smaller blocks.

Popsicle sticks make great holders and double as stirring sticks for the blocks.
Adding marshmallows is fun, and for a minty twist you can warm the top of the block with a hot,
dry knife or spoon, then sprinkle on crushed candy canes or peppermint crunch.

**You can nibble the blocks as is, or stir into 8 ounces
of hot milk for deliciously rich hot chocolate.**

I like to do both: a little stirring, a little nibbling, more stirring, more nibbling.
It's the best of both worlds.

This recipe makes 3 dozen 1 1/4" blocks.
Store them individually, well-wrapped and airtight, at room temperature,
where they'll remain fresh for several weeks.

Freeze for longer storage.

YUMMO!!!!