



## **Muscovado Ganache**

### **INGREDIENTS**

This is a reasonably firm-set ganache that can be cut with a warm dry knife, in the absence of a guitar cutter! I have found that a cheese wire works reasonably well for cutting firm caramels and ganaches, necessity being the mother of all invention.....

600g 70% dark chocolate  
450g double cream  
110g dark Muscovado sugar  
5g Maldon sea salt  
50g unsalted butter  
30g good quality dark rum

Melt the chocolate, ensuring the temperature doesn't exceed 50°. Combine the cream, butter, salt and sugar in a pan and heat just to a simmer. Whisk the cream mix into the melted chocolate. Don't worry if the mix appears to split initially; this is the mix changing from a fat-based emulsion to a water-based emulsion and the mix will re-emulsify as you add more of the liquid.

(The link at the end contains a fuller clear explanation as to what happens when water is added to chocolate.)

Once all the liquid is incorporated check the temperature of the mix. If it has dropped below 45°C warm it back up on a low setting in the microwave. Now cool the ganache by placing the bowl in a tray of cold water and stirring gently but constantly. Cool to 30°C and then transfer to a piping bag or spread into tray or frame. If using a frame place it on an acetate sheet, alternatively line a tray with cling film. Spraying the tray with an aerosol grease spray will help the cling film to adhere to the tray. This technique of tempering the ganache is one I found in the Ramon Morató book *Chocolate*. This is one of the most influential books on chocolate I have read. The technique gives a much more even set to the ganache.



Allow the ganache to set somewhere cool, ideally over night. The ganache can be cut with a warm dry knife. One of the issues I have had with hand-dipping chocolates is that the centres need to be fairly firm to avoid them sinking into the prongs of the dipping fork and becoming stuck. The way I have got around this problem is to spread a thin layer of untempered chocolate onto both sides of the centre and allow it to set before cutting. For really soft centres, chill slightly before trying to cut, but be sure to let the centres come fully back to room temperature before dipping them.

This ganache can also be used to fill moulded chocolate shells or, for a really easy but stylish chocolate, pipe dots of the ganache onto discs of tempered chocolate and sandwich them together.

To make the discs, polish an acetate sheet with a soft clean cloth and pipe buttons of tempered chocolate onto the sheet. Have the sheet on a board or tray so you can lift it up and tap on the bench to settle and spread the buttons into thin discs. Allow to crystallise fully and then sandwich with the ganache.

Dipping chocolates allows you to produce a great product without the need for moulds or any special equipment. A purpose-designed dipping fork and a couple of Silpat non-stick mats are a good investment however. Just drop the chocolate centres one at a time into the bowl of tempered chocolate, lift out with the dipping fork and tap the fork to remove excess chocolate. Wipe the fork on the side of the bowl or even better have a stiff wire fixed over the centre of the bowl so the excess falls directly back into the tempered mass. Slide the chocolates off the fork onto the silpat mat to set. If you make sure that the chocolate is slightly over the end of the fork it should slide off easily. If they stick, pressing down on the fork and twisting slightly will usually release them.

If the chocolate starts to thicken as it cools just give it a few seconds in the microwave on a medium setting and stir well. Just be careful not to over heat. It's worth checking the temper with a palette knife each time you do this.

The dipped chocolates can be decorated in various ways; piped tempered chocolate, nuts or dried fruit added while the chocolate is still wet, gold leaf or lustre powders. One of the simplest ways is to mark the chocolates with the dipping fork. A single diagonal line across a chocolate looks very stylish.



Your choice of chocolate to work with will be very personal; most chefs have a preferred brand and cost will play a part. Valrhona, Cacao Barry and Callebaut are all popular choices and widely available. My primary choice is the premium range of couvertures from Chocovic imported into the UK by specialist Spanish food supplier Mediteria. All of these companies supply great chocolate, the most important thing is to choose something with a flavour profile that works with your centres or fillings.

Work flow is perhaps the real key to making chocolates in a less than ideal environment. If at all possible, make centres on one day, cut on the second day and dip on the third. If I was making a volume of moulded chocolates I would make shells one day, make ganache and fill the shells on the second day and back the shells off on the third day. Having said all that, if push comes to shove, it can all be done in a day!

<http://baking911.com/learn/ingredients/chocolate/problems-and-solutions>

<http://www.ramonmorato.com/index.php?lng=en>

<http://mediteria.com>

<http://www.valrhonapro.com/Accueil.aspx>

<http://www.callebaut.com/uk/en/>

<http://www.cacao-barry.com>

<http://thermomix.vorwerk.co.uk>

