

Tempering Chocolate by the Tabling Method

Step 1: Prepare the Chocolate

- Begin with chocolate that has been melted overnight until completely fluid.
- Ensure all existing cocoa butter crystals are fully melted out before starting. The chocolate should be smooth, loose, and evenly melted.

Step 2: Portion the Chocolate

- Pour approximately two thirds of the melted chocolate onto a clean stone surface.
- Reserve the remaining one third in a bowl and keep it warm.
- If the table surface is cool, avoid spreading the chocolate too thin.

Step 3: Begin Tabling the Chocolate

- Using a bench scraper, spread the chocolate outward on the table.
- Scrape all of the chocolate back toward the center. Work in a continuous circular motion.

Step 4: Keep the Chocolate Moving

- Continue spreading and scraping so all chocolate passes through the working area.
- Do not allow any portion of chocolate to sit untouched on the table.
- Clean the scraper as needed to maintain control.

Step 5: Monitor Crystallization

- Observe the chocolate as it cools from approximately 45°C.
- Look for small specks of solid chocolate forming in the mass.
- These specks indicate cocoa butter crystallization.

Step 6: Control the Set

- As crystallization begins, reduce how thinly the chocolate is spread.
- Avoid overworking the chocolate so it does not thicken into a paste. This will be the final working phase on the table.

Step 7: Gather the Chocolate

- Once the chocolate begins to set, scrape everything into the center.
- Prepare to transfer the chocolate back into the bowl.

Step 8: Recombine with Reserved Chocolate

- Scrape the crystallized chocolate off the table and into the bowl of warm chocolate.
- Work from side to side to collect all chocolate from the surface. Mix until the chocolate is smooth and uniform.

Step 9: Test the Temper

- Dip a strip of parchment paper into the chocolate. Lay the parchment flat on the table surface.
- Within about two minutes, the chocolate should begin setting at the thinnest edge.
- The set should progress evenly across the strip.

Step 10: Confirm Readiness

- Once the test strip sets evenly, the chocolate is properly tempered.
- Do not proceed with production without confirming temper.

Step 11: Clean the Table

- Apply a small amount of neutral vegetable oil to a kitchen towel.
- Polish the table surface to remove remaining chocolate.
- Use oil instead of heat to avoid damaging stone surfaces.