Chocolate Truffles

Basic recipe for truffle filling:
12 oz. chocolate (dark, milk or white - chopped fine)
2 tbsp. unsalted butter (room temperature)
6 oz. heavy cream (3/4 cup)
1 tbsp. light corn syrup

Method: Bring cream and corn syrup just to a boil. Place butter and chocolate into a metal or glass bowl. Pour half of the cream over the chocolate. Let sit for about 30 seconds and then stir to melt all of the chocolate and butter. Add the remainder of the cream and stir. Pour ganache into plastic wrap lined 8” x 8” pan. Allow to harden for 4 hours at room temperature, or about 2 hours in the refrigerator. When set, invert pan onto parchment and remove plastic. Cut ganache into evenly sized pieces and round by hand or use a melon baller to scoop the chocolate. Place in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes to harden again.

Variations:
Add liqueur/brandy/liquor by decreasing the amount of heavy cream to 4 oz. (1/2 cup) and adding 1/4 cup (2 oz.) of the liqueur. Follow the directions above stirring the liqueur into the mixture after the chocolate is fully melted. Some good combinations: Kahlúa with dark chocolate, Gran Marnier with milk chocolate, brandy with dark chocolate, Amaretto with dark chocolate
Create fruit flavors by adding a tablespoon of Icing Fruits (concentrated fruit puree) to the cream right before the boil and then follow the rest of the instructions. Icing fruits come in the following flavors: banana, cherry, lemon, orange, pineapple, red raspberry and strawberry. White chocolate works well with all of these fruit flavors. Some other combinations: dark chocolate and orange, dark chocolate and raspberry, milk chocolate and cherry
Infuse with spices by adding spices to the cream to steep out the flavors of the spice. Examples of spices that work well - cinnamon sticks, star anise, ginger, hot peppers, tea and lavender. You can also use this method and steep flavor from orange, lemon and lime peels. Add the spice to the cream. Bring just to a boil. Remove from heat and set aside. The longer that the cream/spice sets, the stronger the flavor will become. Reheat when ready to make the ganache. Strain out the spices before pouring over the chocolate.

Dipping the Truffles
You can use either coating chocolate (I recommend the Guittard A’Peels) and then you don’t have to temper the chocolate, or you can temper your real chocolate to use. You will need about 1 pound for this amount of ganache filling (you’ll have a bit left over, but it is easier to dip if you have more chocolate). This recipe makes 30 to 36 truffles, depending on the size of your truffles. Working very quickly, dip the ganache ball into the melted chocolate. Place onto parchment lined sheet pan and place in the refrigerator for just a few minutes (about 5) to set. If you want to coat in cocoa powder, nuts, coconut, jimmies, etc., dip the ball into the chocolate, gently tap on the side of the bowl to get off most of the chocolate and place the truffle into a dish with the cocoa powder or nuts. Roll it around to coat. Place onto a parchment lined sheet pan. Place in the refrigerator for 5 minutes to set the coating. Store truffles at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Truffles are best served at room temperature.

Chocolate Covered Strawberries
Don’t wash the strawberries unless necessary, if you do, be sure they are completely dry before dipping. Strawberries should be at room temperature. 1 lb. of chocolate coats about 18 medium sized strawberries. Use the Guittard A’Peels Coating Chocolate or tempered real chocolate. Dip the strawberry into the chocolate and coat up to close to the leaves. Swirl to spin off excess chocolate. Place on parchment lined pan and place in refrigerator for about 5 minutes to set the chocolate. Drizzle with contrasting chocolate for an elegant finished look. For the most fresh strawberries, dip them as close to serving time as possible. Store at cool room temperature.

To create a tuxedo effect, dip in white first, let set, then dip each side in dark chocolate. Silver dragees make cute buttons, put them on before the candy has set. Pipe on bowtie details.
You can always tell the difference by looking at the ingredients label. Real chocolate contains cocoa butter while confectioners coating does not have any cocoa butter. Confectioners coating is made by removing the cocoa butter from real chocolate and replacing it with a vegetable oil like palm kernel oil. Exchanging the cocoa butter for other fats allows the candy to be melted and used for dipping, placing in candy molds, etc. and it hardens and works without having to be tempered. Confectioners coating, also called summer coating, almond bark and coating chocolate looks just like real chocolate. The taste varies by brand. We carry the Guittard A'Peels brand of confectioners coating, it tastes great and is easy to work with.

But if you want the flavor and texture of real chocolate, there is no substitute, and if you are doing something where the chocolate needs to harden such as dipping strawberries or making candy in a mold, then you need to temper the real chocolate. Tempering is done for three reasons: it gives candies a glossy appearance; it makes the chocolate more stable so that it won’t just melt in your hand and it also gives a ‘snap’ to the chocolate when you bite into it. If you don’t temper, chocolate can have a dull, matte appearance, develop spots, and be soft to the bite. Temper is established within a narrow temperature range and varies by the type of chocolate. We carry the Guittard brand of real chocolates in blocks. For Guittard dark, bittersweet chocolate, temper occurs between 88°F and 90°F, with the target being 89°F. For Guittard milk chocolate, the range is 86°F to 88°F, with the target being 87°F.

**TEMPERING CHOCOLATE**

Tempering chocolate is a precise heating and cooling process. There is no single ‘best’ method – chefs each have their individual preferences, but if you have never tempered chocolate before, this method from Guittard is a good place to start.

All equipment should be perfectly clean and dry. (even 1 drop of water can cause problems with your chocolates)
Double boiler (a metal or glass bowl that sits down into a pan so that it touches the water not the bottom of the pan will work)
Rubber spatula
Thermometer that reads from 40-130°F (helpful when you are tempering for the first few times, but it is not necessary)

The first step is breaking the chocolate into small chunks. Using a cutting board and a strong, short-blade knife, insert the tip straight down into the chocolate until the chocolate cracks. You want the pieces to be about 1/2” cubes

Melt chocolate in the top pan of double boiler over water that is about 130°F. The water in the bottom of the double boiler should touch the bottom of the top pan when it is inserted. Use hottest tap water of between 120-130°F, or heat water on stovetop to 120-130°F. Place the top pan over the water and fill with the chunks. Begin stirring in a gentle, sweeping motion that lifts the chocolate off the bottom and sides and lets it get the greatest exposure to the warm surface of the pan. In about 5 minutes or less the chocolate will be partially liquid (about 2/3) and partially chunks (about 1/3). The temperature of the liquid chocolate at this point will be about 95°F. Take the top pan off the bottom of the double boiler and continue stirring to cool the chocolate until the soft lumps disappear and the temperature lowers to 89°F (87°F for milk chocolate). At this point the chocolate should be in temper and ready to use.

Check to see if the chocolate is ready and in good temper by placing a teaspoon of liquid chocolate on a scrap of parchment or waxed paper and place it in a cool area to set. It should begin to look dry on the surface in about 3 minutes. If this is so, begin with the dipping or molding. If not, continue stirring for another 3 minutes. (Keep the chocolate in temper by setting it back on the water and stirring for 10 seconds at a time as it starts setting on the sides of the bowl.)

*Remember, if you are using the chocolate in a ganache or baked good, real chocolate does not need to be tempered. You only need to temper when you are using real chocolate and when you want the chocolate to reharden.*