

Mercken's® Rainbow and Clasen Alpine Chocolate Melting Instructions

We carry two distinct brands of chocolate, We find their taste is far superior to other brands. We carry colors from both Mercken's® and Clasen, Mercken's® is the only brand that we carry when it comes to Milk and Dark Chocolate. Clasen colors tend to have a sweeter taste than Mercken's but melt much thinner and have a brighter color. Neither wafers will taste waxy, and they do not need to have wax or any other thinning agents added to it to maintain a smooth consistency, IF YOU DO IT RIGHT. These chocolates are made to melt and set without added agents or undergoing the tempering process.

IF YOU TAKE ANYTHING OUT OF THIS WHOLE PAGE THIS IS IT-

THE MELTING POINT FOR CHOCOLATE COATING IS 92°, CHOCOLATE AND COLORS ARE AT THEIR THINNEST AT 110°.

CHOCOLATE WILL HAVE A THICKER CONSISTENCY AT ANY TEMPERATURE **HOTTER OR COOLER THAN 110°**

THE BEST METHOD- THE OVEN

This method will provide you with a safe and easy way to keep your chocolate melted and will only burn or scorch if you forget about it or get distracted. Preheat your oven to the **LOWEST POSSIBLE TEMPERATURE**; usually this is warm or 150°-170°. Place chocolates in an aluminum pan. Glass dishware can also be used but remember glass holds heat and will make the chocolate hotter than the temperature in your oven, raising your risk of it burning or scorching. Place the Chocolate on the top or high middle rack away from the Heating element. **KEEP THE OVEN DOOR CLOSED.** Chocolate should melt within 5-10 minutes. Stirring every 3-5 minutes is recommended when using small amounts. If you are melting large quantities of chocolate in a 9 x 13 aluminum pan make sure to spread it as thin as possible and do not stir it until all the chips look melted. (stirring un-melted chips into large amounts of chocolate in the beginning stages of the process will actually lower the overall temperature and will make it take longer) Once your chocolate is completely melted **TURN OFF THE OVEN.** Your melted candy will remain melted for hours with just the heat that remains. If you feel that the temperature is getting too low and your chocolate is beginning to set, turn it back to warm for a minute or two and then turn it off again.

WE DO NOT SUGGEST USING THE FOLLOWING METHODS.

HOWEVER SO MANY PEOPLE USE THEM, WE HAVE CREATED THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO DO IT RIGHT

THE TRADITIONAL METHOD-THE DOUBLE BOILER

First and foremost when using the double boiler technique **THE WATER SHOULD NEVER BOIL!** Use the burner on LOW and stir constantly to get a smooth appearance. Use a large glass bowl that extends far over the sides of the base pan instead of the pan that would normally fit on top of it. The larger, tapered contour of the bowl will force all water away from the chocolate. Water should NEVER come in contact with Chocolate, this means vapor, steam, and drips. Water will make chocolate seize. Seized chocolate has a grainy, "spackle" like appearance. Once this happens you will not be able to use or re-melt this chocolate. **THERE IS NO REMEDY FOR SEIZED CHOCOLATE.**

THE CONVENIENT METHOD- THE MICROWAVE

The microwave gets chocolate too hot, too quickly. Chocolate melted in the microwave will ALWAYS be thicker than chocolate melted with other methods. It only takes a second for chocolate to burn in the microwave. If you choose to use this method you are accepting the risk that comes with it. **AT SOME POINT IN TIME YOU WILL BURN YOUR CHOCOLATE USING THIS METHOD.**

-If using your microwave on full power use intervals of 10-15 SECONDS ONLY

-If using your microwave on half power use intervals of 20-30 SECONDS ONLY

You must stir the wafers, even if not melted, between EACH interval. If you do not stir the wafers the center pieces will burn or become scorched and thick.

-Crock Pots should only be used for melting large quantities of chocolate (5lbs or more). Always use the LOWEST temperature setting and repeatedly stir to prevent hot spots.

You may reheat chocolate, though keeping it at a consistent temperature is recommended. A warming tray will keep the chocolate warm while you work with it, but if you don't have one, use chocolate until it starts to get thick and place back in the oven for a few minutes to re-melt. Once your chocolate is melted you can place it in decorator bags or squeeze bottles.

IF YOUR CHOCOLATE IS THICK- IT IS TOO HOT!

We carry Flo-Coat, an oil additive, which is safe and effective in thinning chocolate that has gotten too hot. An alternative to this is to add 1 Tbs. of Crisco shortening to 1 lb. of chocolate. Any time you add something to chocolate you will make your final product softer than using it in its pure state. **DO NOT ADD WATER, MILK, BUTTER, OR MARGARINE.**

STORING UNUSED CHOCOLATE-

The most important thing to remember when storing your chocolate is to keep it in a dry area that always maintains a CONSTANT TEMPERATURE. Temperature fluctuation will affect the melting capabilities of chocolate more than its age. When chocolate has experienced rapid and frequent temperature fluctuations it will "bloom" or "blush". Blushing is the appearance of a white film on the chocolate; it is the oils from the chocolate coming to the surface and drying. This does not mean your chocolate has gone bad. Chocolate will bloom after 4-6 months naturally. You can attempt to melt your chocolate even if it has bloomed, if it has gotten to the "point of no return" there will not be any adverse effects from eating it. If it will not melt you can dice it into chunks and add them to cookies.

Mercken's® Rainbow and Clasen Alpine Chocolate Hints and Suggestions

USING CANDY MOLDS- Wash molds in lightly soapy warm water and rinse thoroughly. Never place soap directly on the mold. It will remove the slip coat of the mold and will result in dull candy. Dry flat. DO NOT WASH IN DISHWASHER, they will melt and disfigure. If you wash in too hot of water and do not dry flat, the mold will stay in whatever shape they dry in. Make sure your molds do not have any water on them when you go to use them.

Pour chocolate into molds and tap on surface to remove air bubbles from tiny places and give a perfect finish. If you are making suckers, place stick in after the mold is filled with chocolate and roll the stick so that it is covered with chocolate. This will prevent the sucker from breaking or falling off of the stick. If you want to paint colors in the mold, do this before you pour the solid backing color. Use a paint brush or toothpick to move the color in the area you want. Make sure each color is set before adding another and wait till all colors are set before finishing with the solid color. Let the colors set at room temperature, do not set these colors in the freezer or they will release from the mold and the backing fill will seep in front of them. Make sure the solid color isn't hot when you fill the molds or it will run the colors that are painted.

Place mold into freezer to set up. The freezing time will vary according to how thick or large the mold is. If there are any small thin areas on mold, keep checking every few minutes, these areas may crack easily. You may want to set this type up in the refrigerator. The mold is done when you see the chocolate separate from the mold, chocolate shrinks a tiny bit when it sets. To see if it has released hold the mold up and look at the piece in the mold. You will notice that air will be between the chocolate and the plastic.

When you are sure that the candy is completely set, take the mold out of freezer and turn over, the candy should fall out freely, if it is set but the mold is hindering the piece from coming out easily gently hit it on the palm of your hand. If you try a couple of times and it doesn't come out, put back in freezer. If you take the mold out too soon the front of the candy will look very dull and may lose a chunk that sticks to the mold. This means you haven't left it in the freezer long enough. If you leave it in the freezer too long the piece may crack, or be sticky. Sticky chocolate is a result of condensation. Condensation will result if the piece of candy is extremely cold and is exposed to a hot, humid environment. If you have forgot about them or left your molds in the freezer too long and anticipate condensation leave the candy face down in the mold until it reaches room temperature and only the back will get sticky.

FULL MOLDS- If the mold isn't already cut, you will need to do this yourself. Cut a perimeter of 1 – 1 ½" around the entire piece on both molds. Cut the bottom of at least the back half of the mold, leave the front half full to use as a piece mold. The hole will be the only way to pour chocolate in. If the mold is small you will have to cut the bottom of both the front and back. Clip the mold together with bull dog clips or some strong clips. Pour chocolate into the bottom and tap on surface to remove air bubbles several times while filling the mold. It is much easier to remove the air when it doesn't have to travel the entire length of the mold.

FLAVORING CANDY- You may add Candy Oils to flavor chocolate, such as peppermint, orange, etc. DO NOT USE FLAVORS, EXTRACTS, OR EMULSIONS IN CHOCOLATE. These all have water in them which will ruin the chocolate making it very thick.

COLORING CANDY- Mixing or using existing colors is always the best idea for your finished product. You may color white chocolate if you can't get the color you need. Use powdered coloring only. DO NOT USE FOOD COLORING FROM GROCERY STORES! Food coloring gel, and even the newer pastes have water in them and will harden chocolate. To color the chocolate without getting speckles use 2-3 spoonfuls of the melted chocolate in a separate small bowl. This will make it easier to grind out any grains of the coloring, once you have a smooth color add that to the rest of your melted candy. Make the color 3-4 times darker than what you want your full bowl of candy to be. When you use powdered coloring you may want to thin your candy with flo-coat.

There are so many things that you can use to put into your chocolate to make bark candy or even to put into your molds. Dried Strawberries, Cherries, and Cranberries (chop or slice them), Heath Toffee Crunch, White Peppermint Crunch, Crushed Pretzel Rods. If you want a "Crunch" style candy add Crisp Rice. Crisp rice is better to use than Rice cereal because it is round and will not crush or disintegrate while you are stirring it into chocolate.

A NOTE ABOUT PARRAFIN WAX-

Please stop using paraffin wax in your chocolate for ANYTHING. Paraffin is a non-digestible substance. Unless it is specifically identified as FOOD GRADE paraffin you SHOULD NOT ADD IT TO FOOD! Any paraffin labeled for candle making IS NOT food grade.

A NOTE ABOUT PURE CHOCOLATES-

If you use Nestlé's® or Baker's® chocolate you will need to temper it or add FOOD GRADE paraffin. These chocolates are pure chocolates and require tempering. Tempering is a process of raising and lowering the temperature of a substance till it is at the perfect temper to use. People often say they like to use pure chocolate because it tastes better but they will not have a better taste if you have to add wax, and if you don't add wax you HAVE TO temper the chocolate to make it harden.

Sugar Showcase