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Writing & food styling  
by Carolyn Robb."LIVING IN THE GULF"  
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# Chocolate heaven!

There's simply nothing quite like home-made chocolate treats so, when family and friends gather round, impress and delight them all with these seasonal gems, created for *Living in the Gulf* by Carolyn Robb

## Chocolate truffles

Makes about 500g

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450g fine chocolate  
275ml whipping cream  
cocoa powder, for dusting

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Chop the chocolate finely, making the pieces about the same size as gravel. They will melt more successfully if they are all of roughly equal size. A large, heavy cook's knife will make the chopping easier than using a small one.

Put the chopped chocolate in a large heat-proof bowl, preferably warm as it will help the chocolate to melt.

Bring cream to the boil in a small pan. Just as it reaches

boiling point, remove from the heat and pour slowly into the chocolate, beating gently with a wooden spoon.

The chocolate should all melt into a thick, glossy, dark-brown cream. If there are any lumps left, put the bowl over a pan of hot, almost simmering water until they melt. But take care not to overheat it, which will cause the mixture to separate and curdle.

Place the bowl of chocolate in the fridge to stiffen. Depending on the temperature inside your fridge, the mixture will need about an hour to thicken (it should not set solid although, if it does, just melt it over hot water and refrigerate again). Now you have a choice:

thick, solid, luxurious truffles or softer lighter ones. If you prefer an unwhipped truffle with a rich texture, then leave the mix as it is. If you like a soft, airy truffle, beat the mixture with an electric whisk for a minute or so until it starts to change colour. It will become paler and fill with air. Be careful, as overwhipping will curdle the truffle mixture.

Using two teaspoons, scoop out balls of truffle. Roll them lightly into rounds if you wish, though you may prefer them as rough-textured lumps. Drop the truffles into the cocoa powder, making either smaller truffles that can be eaten in one go, or larger ones to be eaten in several bites! Leave truffles in a cool place to set. ▶





## Baked marbled cheesecake

### Base

100g plain flour  
pinch of salt  
50g caster sugar  
50g margarine

### Filling

100g Bournville plain chocolate  
300g cream cheese  
150g caster sugar  
50g plain flour  
5ml vanilla essence  
4 eggs  
142ml carton natural yoghurt

20cm round loose-based  
cake tin, greased

Sieve the flour with a pinch of salt. Stir in the sugar and rub in the margarine. Press the mixture together, then press it on to the base of the cake tin. Bake in a fairly hot oven (200°C) for 10 minutes.

Melt the chocolate in a small bowl over a pan of hot water. Beat the cream cheese with the sugar in a large bowl, then blend in the flour and vanilla essence. Beat in the eggs one at a time, and add the yoghurt. Pour half the filling over the base. Mix the melted chocolate into the remainder of the filling and drop in spoons of this over the vanilla filling. Lightly swirl the two colours together to give a marbled effect. Lower the oven temperature and bake in a warm oven (160°C) for one hour. Turn off the oven and leave the cheesecake in it for a further hour. Take out of the tin when cold.



Chocolate  
heaven!





## Chocolate meringues

Makes 10-12 meringue pairs

3 egg whites  
75g caster sugar  
75g icing sugar  
25g Bournville cocoa

### Decoration

125ml double cream  
3 Cadbury's Flakes  
4 glacé cherries  
12 paper cases

large piping bag and star vegetable pipe  
baking tray covered with Bakewell paper

Whisk the egg whites until very stiff (an electric mixer is ideal to use as it aerates the egg whites well and therefore gives a larger volume). Add the caster sugar and continue whisking so that the meringue is stiff again. Sieve the icing sugar and cocoa together and fold in. At this stage, the mixture becomes rather dry but it will all mix in. Fill the piping bag and pipe rosettes on the prepared tray. The mixture should make between 20 and 24 rosettes, depending on the size of the eggs. Cook the meringues in a very cool oven (130°C) for about one hour. Lower the oven heat to the lowest possible temperature for another four

or five hours to dry out the meringues. Lift them off the paper and store in an airtight tin until required.

Whip the cream until it will just hold its shape. Place a pair of meringues into a paper case, then pipe or spread cream in between. Decorate with a piece of Flake, cutting each one into three pieces, and small pieces of cherry. Pair all the meringues in the same way.

## Chocolate Toblerone sauce

The joy of melting Toblerone rather than ordinary commercial chocolate bars is that it contains chopped praline, which leaves you with a wonderfully nutty sauce that is particularly good over vanilla ice-cream or pancakes – and, of course, saves you the task of making praline with sugar and almonds.

200g dark Toblerone  
30g butter  
100ml whipping cream

Break the Toblerone into triangles, then chop finely. Melt in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Don't be tempted to stir it too much; just leave it be until it is completely soft. Add the butter and stir until melted, then gently stir in the cream. The sauce is now ready to use. ■

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