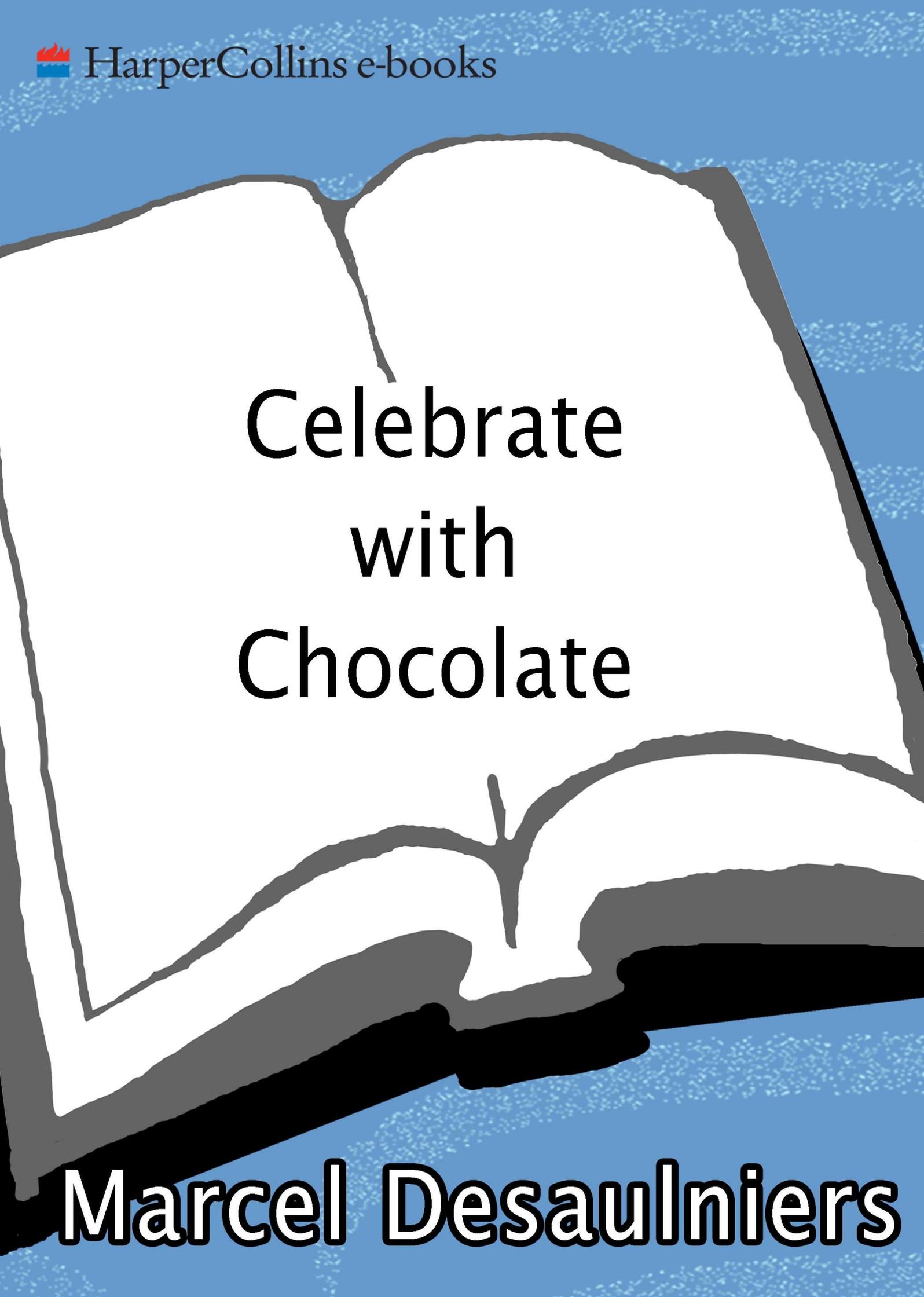




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Celebrate  
with  
Chocolate

**Marcel Desaulniers**

CELEBRATE  
*with* CHOCOLATE

TOTALLY OVER-THE-TOP RECIPES

MARCEL DESAULNIERS

Recipes with Ganache Hill Test Kitchen Chef Brett Bailey  
and Trellis Pastry Chef Kelly Bailey

Photographs by Ron Manville



WILLIAM MORROW

*An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers*

# Dedication

TO MY WIFE, CONNIE DESAULNIERS  
CONNIE AND CHOCOLATE MAKE EVERY DAY A CELEBRATION

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## INTRODUCTION

My love affair with chocolate makes me want to celebrate every day. More than a momentary sensation of pleasure, chocolate has enriched and distinguished my life. When I was a child, my mother's chocolate treats illuminated every conceivable holiday, including birthdays and Christmas, as well as everyday occasions such as staying home from school on a snowy day, or celebrating a cousin's return from the navy during the Korean conflict. As the years progressed, and this culinarily curious teenager turned his after-school work into an avocation, chocolate started speaking in different ways. More than a treat, chocolate became a passion.

However, my subsequent studies at The Culinary Institute of America, then located in New Haven, Connecticut, did not include much chocolate. The curriculum instead required us to learn the basics of culinary classics such as hollandaise and bouillabaisse. Baking and pastry making at that time were a modest part of the two-year program and mostly consisted of learning techniques from the primarily European instructors of making such staples as croissants, puff pastry, and pastillage (a modeling paste used to make elaborate decorations).

Although ganache made its entry later in my nascent career, by the time I reached the Culinary, I had learned enough about the mystique of chocolate from my mother that it became my entree to wooing the damsels of New Haven. Pity the neighboring "Yalies," for chocolate set me apart. Instead of studying together, my dates and I made chocolate treats, and we made sweet time.

After I'd graduated from the Culinary, Manhattan beckoned. Working with the best cooking talent in the country opened my eyes to ganache and its offspring, truffles. I knew I had found my calling. Alas, after only a few months into this part of life's journey, another call came—the draft. I had always dreamed of Paris, but not Parris Island, South Carolina. The flavors and aromas from the kitchens of New York were a far cry from those of the mess hall, where three times a day, indistinguishable monochromatic mush was plopped from a metal spoon onto metal plates held by grunts all in a row. And even more wretched, no chocolate (much less anything else pleasurable) could be found in boot camp.

Then came an all-expenses-paid trip to a former French colony in Southeast Asia, where chocolate again achieved supremacy, thanks to care packages from my mom filled with her chocolate chip cookies. Sharing those cookies made every package a celebration and gave me more prestige than my three stripes.

After my military meanderings, I found myself in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Marriage, children, new jobs, birthdays and anniversaries, events such as the Kentucky Derby, and all manner of holidays (both secular and spiritual), gave me myriad opportunities for chocolate making and giving.

Now my life seems to be defined by chocolate. Books such as *Death by Chocolate* have brought success, infamy, and more reasons to create, consume, and enjoy chocolate. With *Celebrate with Chocolate*, I hope to persuade you that life is a celebration. And, all celebrations deserve chocolate.

# EQUIPMENT, INGREDIENTS, AND TECHNIQUES

# EQUIPMENT

When I graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in 1965, I never dreamed that I would become a cookbook author. My chef fantasies encompassed a world of impressive kitchens outfitted with eight-burner cooktops, stacked ovens, five-foot-tall stock pots, sparkling stainless steel walls, and many busy hands producing exemplary food. My dream became a reality. I have been working in such kitchens, including the kitchen in my own restaurant, The Trellis, in Williamsburg, Virginia, for more than twenty-five years. I sought additional challenges; owning other restaurants was not a consideration, so when I wrote my first cookbook in 1987, I knew I had found another calling.

When I wrote my first five cookbooks, all the recipe testing was accomplished in the home I share with my wife, Connie. Most cookbook authors I know also work from their home kitchens to make certain that consumers will get the same results as the author promises in his or her book. This can only be accomplished by using the same equipment and by cooking surroundings similar to those found in a typical home kitchen (of course, saying “typical” opens up a rather large bag of flour). Although I enjoyed working in my home kitchen, the constant recipe development and testing was taking its toll on my equipment. So in 1995 my business partner, John Curtis, and I bought a piece of property in James City County, Virginia, located about four miles from The Trellis (and two miles from the historic settlement of Jamestown).

*Celebrate with Chocolate* is the fourth book I have completed in a 1,600-square-foot building dedicated only to cookbook recipe testing. All of the equipment we use at Ganache Hill—which is what I named the more than one-acre hilltop on which the test kitchen is perched—is found in an average kitchen. The cooktop, ovens, the small appliances such as food processors and electric mixers, and miscellaneous equipment such as baking sheets and bowls, were purchased from local kitchen equipment outlets, department stores, hardware stores, and supermarkets.

Although the following list of equipment is not complete by any means, as many items as possible should be in your kitchen so that you can produce the magical desserts we make at Ganache Hill and in this book.

## BAKING SHEETS AND CAKE PANS

All of the baking sheets and cake pans used for testing the recipes in this cookbook were for home rather than professional use. Most were purchased at local Williamsburg stores. The exceptions were the 6 × 3-inch aluminum anodized-finish cake pan for the Just for the Two of Us Birthday Cake, the 6 × 2-inch aluminum anodized-finish cake pans for both the Pretty in Pink Cake and Brett and Kelly’s Commitment Cake, and the 4 × 1½-inch nonstick

springform pans for the Chocolate Banana Rum Raisin Ice Cream Cakes. (These pans were purchased from Wilton Enterprises at [www.wilton.com](http://www.wilton.com).) Our baking sheets all have nonstick surfaces and most are 10 × 15 inches. They all have sides for extra rigidity (to prevent them from warping when they are in the oven). Although we always use nonstick baking sheets, we often butter and sometimes line sheets with parchment paper or wax paper to ensure quick release of a baked product, be it cookie or cake. Some batters, especially those with lots of sugar, will stick even to nonstick surfaces. Not only will buttering and papering assist in the effortless release of a product from a pan or baking sheet but will also put a smile on the pot washer's visage, as the task of cleaning will be palliated. I recommend the following manufacturers for quality, value, and accessibility: Ekco Housewares, Inc. (Baker's Secret), Lodge Manufacturing Company (Lodge Cast Iron Cookware), Nordic Ware (Bundt Brand Bakeware), Farberware Inc. (Professional Series), and W. F. Kaiser & Co. (Noblesse Kaiser).

#### BOWLS

I recommend both stainless steel bowls, which are noncorrosive, and economical glass bowls, also noncorrosive and easy to clean. The stainless steel bowls are better conductors of heat and cold, so use one when setting up an ice-water bath. Glass bowls are necessary for use in a microwave oven. These bowl sizes correspond with those recommended in this book:

small = 1½ to 2 quarts  
medium = 2½ to 3 quarts  
large = 3½ to 4 quarts  
extra large = 6 to 7 quarts

#### DOUBLE BOILER

At Ganache Hill, we usually nest a stainless steel or glass bowl over a saucepan to fashion a double boiler. When using such a makeshift double boiler, be certain that half of the bowl can be inserted into the saucepan, and that the bowl covers the entire top of the pan. Prior to setting the bowl over the saucepan, place about 1 inch water in the pan. The bottom of the bowl should not touch the water in the pan. The same applies when using a conventional double boiler composed of two saucepans, the top pan nesting perfectly into the bottom. Keeping the bottom of the bowl or top saucepan from contact with the water will prevent chocolate and other foods from getting too hot and scorching.

#### ELECTRIC MIXERS

To produce the desired volume and most consistent recipe results, I recommend a table-model electric mixer. Buy an extra bowl, which will come in handy for recipes like the Chocolate Madras Cake (page 51). In this recipe, the beating of egg yolks is immediately followed by the whisking of egg

whites. Rather than transferring the yolks to a separate bowl, then cleaning the electric mixer bowl before whisking the egg whites, you can simply remove the bowl with the yolks along with the paddle, then insert the extra bowl with a balloon whip. At Ganache Hill, we have two KitchenAid mixers, a model K5SS 5-quart, as well as a model KSM90 4½-quart. I find the pouring shield attachment a necessity for the table-model mixer to keep flour and other ingredients from flying out of the bowl. Handheld electric mixers are effective for many batters, especially if they are small in volume, but these mixers are useless when mixing large amounts of batter or when mixing dense doughs or batters.

If you are serious about successful dessert making, make an investment in a table-model mixer. A quality mixer will give you many years of reliable service.

#### ICE CREAM MACHINE

Making ice cream at home has become easier in the last few years because of innovative (hands-free and simple to use) and inexpensive (fifty- to sixty-dollar) machines. Previously you could choose an electronically cooled, countertop ice cream freezer with about a 2-quart capacity that would set you back a thousand dollars or so, or a hand-cranked machine that required ice and salt and was tedious to use. Today's easy-to-use electric machines require no cranking, ice, or salt. Just freeze the ice cream in an insulated canister insert that has been frozen for about twenty-four hours, then inserted in the electrically driven base of the machine. With this type of machine, it takes about thirty minutes for the ice cream to be frozen enough to place in the freezer to harden further. Look for a machine that makes from 1½ to 2 quarts in kitchenware and department stores.

#### ICE WATER BATH

Many home cooks and bakers are not familiar with the ice water bath. This helps to quickly cool hot food so it can be stored in the refrigerator without bacteria growth occurring. Certain foods may be cooled in the refrigerator if handled properly, such as ganache, when spread onto a baking sheet in a thin layer that will cool rapidly in the refrigerator. Other food items, such as hot ice cream custard, need to be cold before they can be transferred to an ice cream machine. Custards are more efficiently cooled by being placed in a 3- to 4-quart bowl, which is then placed in a sink or an extra large bowl (6- to 7-quart) partially filled with ice water. A stainless steel bowl is a better conductor of cold than glass or plastic. Stir the hot mixture frequently for quick cooling.

#### MICROWAVE OVEN

How things have changed! Since the microwave oven was introduced for home use in the late 1960s until 1999, I was always quick to say that I did not own one—not at home, not at my restaurant. After all, I was a professional

chef. Now that I am also a cookbook author, my tune has changed, especially when it comes to melting chocolate in the microwave oven (see pages 20–21). At Ganache Hill we use a Panasonic Model NN-S758, 1100-watt microwave oven that we purchased for the modest price of \$150 at our local Target.

The settings vary widely on microwave ovens made by different manufacturers, so I urge caution when following explicit directions such as those listed in Techniques for melting chocolate in a microwave. Use your own oven owner's manual. Just to be on the safe side, I would err in favor of caution the first time and place the chocolate, or whatever else you are heating, on a lower setting than suggested and heat for a few seconds less.

#### OVENS

I will use the bully pulpit of this cookbook to stress the importance to successful baking of knowing the exact internal temperature of your oven versus the setting. Most ovens, whether they are designed for commercial operation or for the home kitchen, are very unreliable when it comes to the oven temperature settings. Typically, I have found a 20° to 25°F difference between the temperature selected and the actual oven temperature. You may successfully braise meat or even roast a chicken with this temperature variance, but when it comes to cakes, cookies, and other baked goods, forget about it! The only way to ensure that an oven is operating at a designated temperature is to place a mercury-filled tube thermometer in the oven and rely on the thermometer rather than the oven setting, whether manual or digital, for an accurate temperature.

#### PARCHMENT OR WAX PAPER

The use of parchment (or wax) paper to line cake pans helps ensure that baked cake layers will release effortlessly from the pans. Although it may sound strange that I sometimes call for so-called nonstick pans to be lined with paper and also buttered, I have found this method to work the best with certain recipes. Wax paper may be used as a substitute for parchment paper except in the few cases when the paper is directly exposed to heat (the paraffin on wax paper will melt in the oven if the surface of the paper is exposed—if the paper is not covered with cake batter, for example—or when the rigidity of the parchment paper is preferred over that of wax paper.

#### PASTRY BAG

I have never been a fan of the traditional canvas pastry bag or even of the easier-to-clean, plastic-lined fabric pastry bag. Cleaning the bags is tedious work, and having those bags staring at me like dunce caps in some nightmare while they were drying out before being stored was strange. I prefer disposable plastic bags. Pipe and toss is where it's at! Check out [www.wilton.com](http://www.wilton.com) for plastic disposable pastry bags.

#### SAUCEPANS

In my last book, *Death by Chocolate Cakes*, I wrote that “I have never been overly particular about the pedigree of the cookware I own.” Then I went on to say that I had recently had a change of heart about cookware because of receiving a piece that was of fine quality as well as beautiful. I opined that perhaps my casual attitude about cookware would change. Well, here we are three years later, and I still have that one outstanding piece of cookware surrounded by the same ragtag saucepans that we have always had at Ganache Hill. If you have the means to purchase the finest cookware available, by all means do so; but such cookware certainly is not critical for the baker or cook, because for the most part, any old pot or pan will do. Below are the saucepan sizes suggested in this book and their equivalents:

small = 1 quart  
medium = 1½ to 2 quarts  
large = 3 quarts

#### SPATULAS

**OFFSET SPATULA** A spatula with an offset blade is very handy for spreading batter inside cake pans. Although a rubber spatula or an icing spatula will do, the task of spreading within the confines of a cake pan is made easier with an offset spatula. I recommend an offset spatula with a 4- to 5-inch-long and ¾-inch-wide blade.

**RUBBER SPATULA** The rubber spatula is one of the most effective tools a baker or cook can have. No other tool is as useful for removing every ounce of batter, chocolate, or other foods from the inside of a mixing bowl or food processor bowl. Keep a selection of rubber spatulas in many sizes on hand along with a few heat-resistant spatulas for working with very hot ingredients.

**UTILITY TURNER** For the “big jobs” such as transferring one of our not insubstantial cakes from a cardboard cake circle to a serving platter, a spatula known as a utility turner with a blade about 3 inches wide and 7 to 8 inches long will do the trick.

#### THERMOMETERS

**CANDY THERMOMETER** At Ganache Hill we use a very precise temperature measuring device for gauging the temperature of items such as bubbling hot sugar and vegetable oil being heated in a deep fryer. Our Taylor glass thermometer housed in a stainless steel jacket accurately measures temperatures from 100° to 400°F.

**OVEN THERMOMETER** The only way to ensure that an oven is operating at a

designated temperature is to place a mercury-filled tube thermometer in the oven and rely on that rather than on the oven setting, whether manual or digital, for an accurate temperature. This type of thermometer may be left in the oven at all times, no matter how high the heat, with the exception of the self-clean setting, which produces heat high enough to ruin most thermometers. These thermometers may be found in hardware stores.

**INSTANT-READ THERMOMETER** Keep this type of thermometer out of the oven (the protective glass cover is not heat resistant); use it when you need an instant reading of the internal temperature of a cheesecake, or a gauge of how hot or cold a liquid may be. Look for an instant-read thermometer with a range of 0° to 200°F at a variety of retail outlets or online.

#### WHISKS

How elegant and useful the whisk! Some stiff, others springy, all tactile. A hands-on piece of equipment that is essential for so many kitchen procedures. I suggest a few different sizes of stainless steel whisks from 6 to 12 inches in length, equally divided between light and flexible whisks (for light batters, whipped cream, and meringues), and heavier gauge and sturdy whisks (for sauces, heavy batters, and ganache).

## INGREDIENTS

All of the ingredients used for testing the recipes in this book were purchased at local (Williamsburg, Virginia) supermarkets or specialty food stores. This point is made to emphasize that it isn't necessary to reside in a big city to have access to top-notch ingredients and turn out amazing chocolate desserts.

I am an ardent proponent of market shopping. Without high-quality ingredients, a baker is destined to produce second-rate desserts. Even shelf-stable products such as unsweetened cocoa powder will deteriorate if stored in the cupboard for too many moons. Buy what is needed, when it is needed. When purchasing items such as baking soda, spices, chocolate, and other dry goods, look for small containers. Although it may seem more economical to purchase in bulk, when these items start having birthdays, they will not deliver their intended flavor or fulfill their function.

Read the list of ingredients in each recipe and make sure you have all the ingredients on hand before you start. Organize the ingredients as listed in the recipe, which means cut the butter into ½-ounce pieces, chop the chocolate, measure the flour, and don't start production until you have all of the ingredients assembled and in a state of preparedness as described in the ingredient list.

I offer the following information about some of the essential ingredients used throughout this book, as a guide to selecting the specific quality of

product needed for the preparation of extraordinary desserts. The brands used at Ganache Hill are listed merely to offer a benchmark for quality product, not as an endorsement.

#### BAKING POWDER AND BAKING SODA

Baking soda and baking powder are leaveners that are activated as soon as they are added to a liquid. Baking soda (pure bicarbonate of soda) delivers its punch when the liquid is acidic, such as buttermilk; double-acting baking powder (an amalgam of bicarbonate of soda, cream of tartar, and cornstarch) gets on its way no matter the liquid, as the cream of tartar provides the acidity. As soon as the soda or powder is added to a batter, leavening begins. So don't let the batter sit around; get it in the oven right away.

Always check the expiration date on the package (usually found on the bottom), especially with baking powder. This is not to say that past the expiration dates these products will not do their levitating work, but why take the chance? I also recommend purchasing the smallest package of each available. Be precise in the measurement of both these ingredients, as too much or too little will not deliver the desired results.

Finally, please do not use baking soda that has been placed in the fridge for the last few months as an odor suppressor; otherwise, the bicarbonate of soda police will be knocking on your door.

At Ganache Hill we use Calumet baking powder and Arm & Hammer baking soda.

#### BUTTER

My admiration and love for butter has never wavered. What is it that makes butter so desirable? Butter, whether served at table or used as an ingredient in sweet or savory recipes, brings an inimitable fullness of flavor to food. I would much prefer to eat a very modest portion (even just a single bite) of a pastry made with butter than to indulge in a huge confection that has been produced using a bogus butter-like product.

Butter contributes positively on all fronts when it comes to baked desserts, brownies, or even when the confection is not baked, like truffles. In baked desserts, butter has positive effects on flavor, moistness, crumb texture, and even leavening. When it comes to truffles, butter provides much of their melt-in-your-mouth character.

It is a rare recipe in this book that does not contain butter. At Ganache Hill and The Trellis, we purchase U.S. Grade AA unsalted butter. Unsalted butter should be stored in the refrigerator or freezer to deter rancidity. All of the butter used in these recipes was taken directly from the refrigerator. Unsalted butter should never be kept at room temperature for more than a few hours. Although I prefer the ultra pure taste of unsalted butter, it may turn rancid if not properly stored. If you are not able to purchase unsalted butter, you may use salted butter for the recipes in this book without altering the recipes.

For long-term storage, more than a week or so, I store butter in the freezer. To help prevent rancidity, always thaw frozen butter in the refrigerator rather than at room temperature (this may take a couple of days).

Use softened butter if you choose to use a handheld electric mixer or a whisk, rather than the recommended table-model electric mixer.

At Ganache Hill we use Land O Lakes butter.

#### CHOCOLATE

CHOCOLATE A HEALTH FOOD? the headline screams in the *New York Times*. Every month, it seems, a university somewhere in America releases the results of a study on the wholesomeness of chocolate. The latest excitement centers around flavonoids, which are powerful antioxidants. I wish these university researchers would realize that most people do not need to be encouraged to partake of the fruit of the cacao tree. The fact is that most people are already passionate about eating chocolate (the ones I know, anyway). Although I shall never be mistaken for a university researcher, it is my hope that the research underlying this cookbook will encourage you to eat chocolate not only for its healthful effects but for the sheer joy it will bring when consumed.

<u>MEASURING BUTTER</u>			
These equivalents will make it easy to measure a hard stick of butter just taken from the refrigerator if you don't have a scale:			
<b>1 ounce</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>2 tablespoons</b>	<b>= 1/4 stick</b>
<b>2 ounces</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>4 tablespoons</b>	<b>= 1/2 stick</b>
<b>3 ounces</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>6 tablespoons</b>	
<b>5 ounces</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>10 tablespoons</b>	
<b>6 ounces</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>12 tablespoons</b>	<b>= 1 1/2 sticks</b>
<b>1/4 pound</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>8 tablespoons</b>	<b>= 1 stick</b>
For chopped butter:			
<b>1/4 ounce</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>1/2 tablespoon</b>	
For melted butter used in pan preparation:			
<b>1 teaspoon</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>1/3 tablespoon</b>	

Ganache Hill test kitchen chef Brett Bailey purchased all of the chocolate used to test the recipes in this book at local (Williamsburg, Virginia) supermarkets. Fortunately, several excellent chocolate manufacturers produce high-quality chocolate here in the United States. All of the brands we purchased will be familiar to the home baker and are available at most supermarkets. Although I find certain brands of European chocolate to be delicious, some are too complex and deliver flavors that may be overwhelming and bitter to some. Whether you purchase chocolate manufactured in the United States or in Europe, I encourage you to read the

ingredient list on the back to verify that you are purchasing real chocolate. If the label lists any fat other than cocoa butter, it's not bona fide. Some manufacturers add palm kernel oil and/or coconut oil to their chocolates. Give those chocolates a wide berth.

Although the experts recommend that storage conditions for chocolate be cool and dry (at a temperature range of 65° to 68°F with 50 percent relative humidity), I have found that an air-conditioned room temperature in the range of 68° to 78°F works fine. If storage conditions are too warm, the chocolate may develop gray surface streaks caused by the cocoa butter in the chocolate rising to the surface, and when conditions are damp, the sugar may possibly do the same thing. If you purchase only what you need for a particular recipe, you should not have to concern yourself with storage conditions.

#### TYPES OF CHOCOLATE

**CHOCOLATE CHIPS AND MINI-MORSELS** Use chips and mini-morsels only when a recipe calls for them. Never substitute chips or mini-morsels in recipes calling for semisweet baking chocolate. Although pleasing to eat out of hand and deliciously textural in chocolate chip cookies and other recipes, chips and mini-morsels are not—I repeat, not—suitable as a substitute for baking chocolate. Most chips and morsels are formulated differently from baking chocolate, which is the reason they maintain their shape even after being baked. As with other chocolate, choose only chips and mini-morsels that have cocoa butter as the only fat, not palm and/or coconut oil.

At Ganache Hill we use Baker's<sup>®</sup> Semi-Sweet Real Chocolate Chips and Nestlé Real Semi-Sweet Chocolate Mini Morsels.

**MILK CHOCOLATE** We use very little milk chocolate in this book—1 ounce for the Chocolate Hazelnut Christmas Tree Stump (page 29)—so little that it seems frivolous to mention it in this section. So I will merely say that if you want a bar of milk chocolate suitable for our recipes and delicious eaten out of hand, select the same brand we use.

At Ganache Hill we use Ghirardelli Pure Milk Chocolate.

**UNSWEETENED BAKING CHOCOLATE** Unsweetened baking chocolate, sometimes called chocolate liquor, is the juice that is produced when roasted cocoa beans are processed, then ground into liquid. After additional processing to ensure smoothness, the liquid is shaped and hardened into blocks. The package labeling for unsweetened chocolate should list only one ingredient—chocolate. Unsweetened chocolate is not eaten on its own, but it is the core of other baking chocolates such as semisweet. Unsweetened chocolate is by composition more than 50 percent cocoa butter; the remaining amount is termed cocoa solids. It contains no sugar or other additives. At Ganache Hill

we use Baker's® Unsweetened Baking Chocolate Squares.

**SEMISWEET BAKING CHOCOLATE** Semisweet baking chocolate is made up of unsweetened chocolate (a minimum of 35 percent), cocoa butter, sugar, soy lecithin (an emulsifier that keeps the chocolate smooth and liquid), and vanilla extract. Many of the recipes in this book contain some semisweet baking chocolate. If you prefer darker, more assertively flavored chocolate, substitute bittersweet chocolate in exactly the same amount in any of our recipes. As previously mentioned, do not purchase chocolate that contains any fat other than cocoa butter. At Ganache Hill we use Baker's® Semi-Sweet Baking Chocolate Squares.

**WHITE CHOCOLATE** Let the buyer beware when it comes to white chocolate. The ingredient listing on a package of white chocolate should be: sugar, cocoa butter, milk, soy lecithin, vanilla extract. Do not buy any white chocolate that lists palm kernel oil and/or coconut oil as ingredients. We found the white chocolate listed below delivered the sought-after results 100 percent of the time when testing recipes in this book that contain white chocolate. I emphasize this not to sell you on the brand but to guarantee success. I get many comments about failed recipes from folks who have purchased imitation white chocolate; i.e., chocolate that did not contain cocoa butter. At Ganache Hill we use Baker's® Premium White Chocolate Baking Squares.

**UNSWEETENED COCOA POWDER** The intense chocolate flavor achieved in a recipe with unsweetened cocoa powder is due to the low fat content of the cocoa. Cocoa is produced by hydraulically pressing unsweetened chocolate (which contains 50 to 56 percent cocoa butter) to remove most of the cocoa butter. Cocoa, however, is not totally fat free; it does contain residual amounts of cocoa butter. The lack of cocoa butter makes cocoa highly soluble in liquid—think hot chocolate. The flavor intensity of cocoa is diminished by exposure to air, so purchase small containers and keep the container tightly sealed. Look at the container closely before purchasing to make certain you are not selecting a breakfast cocoa drink mix. The only ingredient listed on the package should be cocoa. At Ganache Hill we use Hershey's Cocoa.

#### CREAM

Heavy cream, a.k.a. whipping cream, is luscious and luxurious on the palate, somewhat like a butterfly alighting on a stamen. Ever so delicate in flavor, yet almost overwhelming in how it feels in the mouth, cream, when in concert with chocolate, comes together as the confectionery miracle known as ganache. Of course, it does much more, as can be witnessed by the inclusion of cream in a majority of the recipes in this cookbook.

Unless you have a milk cow grazing in your backyard, you will probably have to settle for purchasing ultra pasteurized cream rather than fresh. All of

the recipes in this cookbook were tested using ultra pasteurized cream purchased at the supermarket.

One big advantage ultra pasteurized cream has over fresh is its long shelf life; it will stay fresh under refrigeration for weeks. On the ever-so-slight downside, ultra pasteurized cream does not burst forth with pure flavor as does fresh cream. When used as a dessert ingredient, however, ultra pasteurized cream is almost impossible to distinguish from fresh. At Ganache Hill we use Richfood<sup>®</sup> Heavy Whipping Cream.

#### EGGS

Without getting into a chemistry lesson, suffice it to say that eggs are a natural as well as culinary phenomenon. When cooking with eggs they must be fresh. If you are as scientifically challenged as I am, that's about all you need to know about the egg (I myself was never intrigued by the which came first theory).

Fresh Grade AA large eggs are essential for the successful preparation of recipes in this cookbook. Always purchase eggs from a refrigerated display case, and get them back into refrigeration as soon as possible. Using smaller or larger size eggs may have a negative impact on most recipes in this cookbook. Although the substitution of one size egg for another may sometimes work, I can't guarantee that it will. I have not found that room temperature egg whites whisk up into more volume than refrigerated egg whites (in all of our recipe testing we use refrigerated egg whites). To stay healthy, avoid consuming raw eggs (keep your fingers out of the batter). At Ganache Hill we use U.S. Grade AA large eggs from the supermarket.

#### FLOUR

All of the measurements for flour in this cookbook are presifted, so measure, then sift. Using a quality brand of flour such as Gold Medal makes sense to me (although some lesser known regional brands such as White Lily are exceptional), especially with so little pricing difference between branded and generic. Improperly milled flour can substantially affect the quality of a pastry. Always make certain that the flour specified is what you are using; in other words, don't substitute cake flour for all-purpose. At Ganache Hill we use Gold Medal<sup>®</sup> all-purpose flour and Swans Down<sup>®</sup> cake flour.

## TECHNIQUES

I have made an effort to include as much technique information as possible in each recipe, and, if not there, then in the Chef's Touch of each recipe. Perhaps one of the most useful techniques is the organization of the ingredients. Another point, though perhaps not a technique *per se*, is the thorough reading of a recipe before getting started. The recipe is your road map to success.

Closely followed, it will lead to a destination of delectation. Disregarding the recipe may lead to a bumpy road with confectionery mishaps. Here are some additional techniques to point you in the direction of pleasurable progress.

#### MAKING CHOCOLATE CURLS

Easily fashioned chocolate curls with their distinctive appearance add a special finishing touch. In Rolf's Old-World Black Forest Cake (page 42), 2 ounces of semisweet chocolate curls are needed to garnish the cake. Although this is accurate, you will have to start making the curls from a piece of chocolate larger than 2 ounces; otherwise, you will have shavings, rather than large curls. An 8-ounce or so block of chocolate is just about the right size (larger is fine, smaller is torture). It helps if the chocolate is at warm room temperature, 82°F or so, rather than at cool air-conditioned room temperature, 72°F or less. Use a sharp vegetable peeler to shave curls from the block. Chocolate curls may be prepared in advance, then stored in a tightly sealed plastic container in the refrigerator until needed.

#### MELTING CHOCOLATE IN A DOUBLE BOILER

Although using a double boiler to melt chocolate is simple and efficient, we now use the even simpler and very efficient microwave oven to melt chocolate at Ganache Hill. If you choose the double boiler method, some precautions should be noted: First set up the double boiler as described in the Equipment section (see page 8). Melt coarsely chopped chocolate slowly over medium-low or medium heat while stirring frequently with a rubber spatula until the chocolate is completely melted and smooth. Melting too quickly over high heat may render scorched, inedible chocolate. Avoid introducing any moisture into the melting or already melted chocolate; otherwise, it may seize (the chocolate stiffens into an unusable, coagulated mass). Once melted, the chocolate should stay fluid for 30 to 60 minutes, depending upon the temperature in your kitchen. If your kitchen is cool, keep the melted chocolate over warm water until ready to use, unless the recipe requires the chocolate to be chilled before using.

AMOUNT OF CHOPPED CHOCOLATE	APPROXIMATE MELTING TIME
1 to 2 ounces	2½ to 3 minutes
3 to 4 ounces	3½ to 4 minutes
5 to 6 ounces	4½ to 5 minutes
7 to 8 ounces	5½ to 6 minutes
9 to 16 ounces	6½ to 8 minutes

#### MELTING CHOCOLATE IN A MICROWAVE OVEN

Microwave coarsely chopped chocolate in a glass bowl. After removing the chocolate from the microwave oven, use a rubber spatula to stir until smooth. There seems to be no uniformity in microwave oven power settings. At Ganache Hill, we use an 1100-watt microwave oven on the medium setting for melting chocolate. The following melting times may vary depending on the model, wattage, and power settings on your microwave oven.

AMOUNT OF CHOPPED CHOCOLATE	APPROXIMATE MELTING TIME
1 to 3 ounces	1½ minutes
4 to 8 ounces	2 to 2½ minutes
9 to 16 ounces	2½ to 3 minutes

#### MELTING CHOCOLATE WITH OTHER INGREDIENTS

Several of the recipes in this cookbook require melting chopped chocolate with other ingredients such as butter and cream. As with melting chocolate by itself, a modicum of attention and care is recommended. It's always best to heat chocolate slower rather than faster, and over lower rather than higher heat. If it seems odd that in some cases it takes less time to melt chocolate with other ingredients in the microwave oven than chocolate by itself, that is because the fat in butter and cream attracts the microwaves and accelerates the cooking process.

AMOUNT OF INGREDIENTS	DOUBLE BOILER TIME	MICROWAVE OVEN TIME
2 ounces semisweet chocolate and 1 ounce unsweetened chocolate with 3 ounces unsalted butter	1½ minutes	5½ to 6 minutes
4 ounces semisweet chocolate with 2 ounces unsalted butter	1¾ minutes	5 to 5½ minutes
3 ounces semisweet chocolate and 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate with 2 ounces unsalted butter	1¾ minutes	6½ to 7 minutes