

Indulgence

with
chris sprague

In honor of Valentine's Day, this is a very special dessert. You can prepare these soufflés ahead of time and simply pop them in the oven to cook while the dinner dishes are being cleared. Your sweetheart will think you are truly magical.

Bittersweet Chocolate Soufflés with White Chocolate & Rum Sauce

8 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
½ cup milk
3 eggs yolks
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

4 eggs whites
1 teaspoon lemon juice
¼ cup sugar
Confectioner's sugar
White Chocolate and Rum
Sauce (recipe follows)

Lightly butter eight 6-ounce ramekins, and dust them well with granulated sugar. Set them aside. Melt the chocolate in a double boiler, covered, over barely simmering water. Remove the cover, and stir until the chocolate is smooth. Remove the top pan of the double boiler from the heat.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter over moderate heat. Stir in the flour, and cook until the mixture is thickened but not browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the milk, and whisk briskly until the mixture is smooth and thick, about 3 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat, add the melted chocolate, and whisk until smooth. Whisk in the egg yolks and vanilla, and set the pan aside.

Beat the egg whites and lemon juice at medium speed until soft peaks form, about 1 minute. Gradually sprinkle the granulated sugar on top; continue to beat at high speed until whites are stiff but not dry. Using a rubber spatula, stir one-quarter of the whites into the chocolate mixture to lighten it, then fold in the remaining whites. Spoon the mixture into the ramekins, filling each to the top.

At this point the soufflés can be refrigerated, uncovered, for up to 5 hours.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Bake the soufflés for 17 minutes, or until they are puffed and slightly cracked. Dust them with confectioner's sugar, and serve immediately. Pass a pitcher or the White Chocolate and Rum Sauce.

Serves 8

For the White Chocolate and Rum Sauce:

6 ounces white chocolate, chopped

1/3 cup dark rum

In the top of a double broiler, slowly melt the white chocolate over simmering water. Whisk in the rum until it is completely incorporated. Remove the top of the double broiler from the heat, and let the sauce stand at room temperature. The sauce may be served at room temperature or slightly warm.