

Glossary

Angel Food Cake

Unique because of its light texture, angel food cake is a supreme example of the tremendous leavening power of egg whites. The batter is made with just egg whites, sugar and flour and is baked in a tube pan.

Baba

Babas are small cakes made from a yeast dough containing raisins or currants. They are baked in cylindrical molds and then soaked with a sugar syrup usually flavored with rum.

Baking Blind

This term refers to baking an unfilled tart shell to produce a partially or fully baked crust. It is done by lining the dough with parchment paper or foil and filling it with pie weights or dried beans to hold the shape during baking.

Bavarian Cream

This molded cream is made from custard sauce or sweetened fruit puree that is bound with gelatin and lightened with whipped cream. Bavarian cream can be served on its own or used as a filling for cold charlottes or molded cakes.

Bitter or Unsweetened chocolate

Chocolate liquid which has been cooled and molded into blocks, the best for baking or cooking.

Boiled Icing

This icing, which is similar to Italian meringue, is used as a filling and frosting for a number of old-fashioned American layer cakes such as devil's food cake.

Breakfast Cocoa

Cocoa powder with at least twenty-two percent cocoa butter.

Butter Cakes

These cakes are made by first creaming butter with sugar to incorporate air. Whole eggs or egg yolks are added and flour is stirred in alternately with the liquid (often milk) at the end. When made with whole eggs, baking powder is often used as the leavener. When only the yolks are added at first, the beaten whites are folded in at the end. Most American layer cakes are butter cake-based.

Buttercream

Buttercream is basically a flavored mixture of butter, sugar and eggs that is used to fill and frost cakes. Whole eggs, yolks or whites may be heated with sugar over simmering water and whipped cold before adding the butter and flavoring, or a sugar syrup cooked to the firm-ball stage can be poured over the eggs, then whipped until cold before the butter and flavoring are added. Buttercream can also be made by combining butter with pastry cream in a 1-to-2 ration or with custard sauce, 1-to-1.

Cacao

Refers to the unprocessed seed of the cacao tree, although some industry members use the term "cocoa" to refer to the plant and its seeds.

Caramel

See Sugar Cooking.

Charlotte

This molded dessert is composed of a filling surrounded by ladyfingers or bread. Apple charlotte is a golden crusted dessert made by baking a thick apple compote in a mold lined with buttered bread. Cold charlottes are made in a ladyfinger-lined mold and filled with a Bavarian cream; for frozen charlottes, a frozen soufflé or mousse replaces the Bavarian cream.

Chocolat au lait

Milk chocolate.

Chocolat blanc

White chocolate.

Chocolat noir

Dark chocolate, literally "black chocolate".

Chocolate Liquid

Sometimes called "chocolate liquor," the basic material of all chocolate and cocoa products comes from ground nibs, (the meat) of the cacao seed. Chocolate liquor is actually about half cocoa butter and half cocoa solids.

Chocolatier:

Chocolate artisan.

Chocolatière

Like a teapot, but for hot chocolate.

Cocoa Beans

Source of all chocolate and cocoa, cocoa beans are found in the pods (fruit) of the cocoa tree, an evergreen cultivated mainly within twenty degrees north or south of the equator.

Cocoa Butter

The yellowish-white vegetable fat, removed from chocolate liquid under high pressure. Cocoa butter is solid at room temperature but melts easily in your mouth or at room temperature.

Cocoa Powder

It is the defatted powder made from cacao. It's the solid portion that remains after the cocoa butter has been pressed out of the chocolate liquor. Cocoa powder is categorized by the amount of cocoa butter that remains after pressing. Retail cocoa products can range from 10% to 24% fat, depending on whether they're beverage, breakfast, or cooking cocoa.

Cookies

Cookies can be prepared in myriad shapes and textures and are usually categorized by the way they are formed. Drop cookies are dropped from a spoon. Rolled cookies are made from a chilled dough that is rolled out and cut into shapes. Bar cookies are baked in sheets and then cut into squares or bars. Molded cookies can either be shaped by hand, stamped with a pattern before baking or baked directly in a mold. Bagged or piped cookies are shaped with a pastry bag or a cookie gun.

Cream Puff Paste (*Pâte à Choux*)

Somewhere between a batter and a dough, cream puff paste is made by beating flour and then eggs into boiling water and butter. Once shaped and baked, it is crisp on the outside, almost hollow inside and forms a convenient container for whipped cream, pastry cream or ice cream (cream puffs, éclairs and profiteroles, e.g.). The dough can also be deep-fried and rolled in sugar to make sweet fritters (beignets).

Custard Sauce (*Crème Anglaise*)

Often served as an accompaniment to sweet soufflés, fruit desserts and cakes, custard sauce is also the foundation for Bavarian cream and for frozen desserts such as rich ice cream. Sometimes called stirred or pouring custard, it is a mixture of egg yolks, sugar and milk and/or cream that is cooked only until the yolks coagulate to

thicken the custard. The mixture must not boil or else the yolks will scramble; if this does happen, whip the custard in a blender to emulsify it.

Dacquoise

This classic French cake is composed of baked nut meringues layered with buttercream. There are many names for nut meringues and meringue-based desserts -- *succès, progrès, japonais* among them -- and the proportions, size and type of nut(s) used varies from one to another.

Dock

This term refers to piercing pastry doughs before baking. The holes allow the steam to escape, preventing the dough from bubbling and becoming distorted.

“Dutched” or “Dutch” Chocolate

It is made from chocolate liquor or cocoa powder that has been treated with alkaline salts to give it a darker color and a milder flavor. The process—which came to be known as “Dutching”—was invented in Holland by the chemist Coenraad Van Houten.

Dutch Process Cocoa

Cocoa powder which has been treated with alkali to neutralize the natural acids; darker in color and slightly different in flavor from natural cocoa.

Foam Cakes

In these cakes, air is beaten into whole eggs and sugar before the other ingredients (starches) are gently folded in. Genoise is an example of a foam cake, and some other sponge cakes fall in this category as well.

Ganache

Ganache is a rich chocolate mixture made by combining chopped semisweet chocolate and boiling cream and stirring until smooth. The proportions of chocolate to cream can vary, and the resulting ganache can be used as a cake glaze or beaten until fluffy and used as a filling or as the base for truffles and other chocolate confections.

Gateau

The French word for cake (pl. *gâteaux*).

Genoise

Genoise is the classic, fine-crumbed French sponge cake made by beating warm whole eggs with sugar until the mixture more than triples in volume, then folding in the flour and sometimes melted butter too.

Glazes

Glazes are used to give desserts a smooth and/or shiny finish. Cake glazes can be water icing (confectioners' sugar mixed with liquid), melted chocolate in combination with cream, butter and/or sugar syrup, or fondant (a thick shiny opaque icing). Caramel is used to glaze some cakes and small pastries; and sugar cooked to the hard-crack stage can be used to give pastries sheen but no color. Tart glazes are made from sieved jam, preserves or jelly, or a combination of the above. Pastry glazes (brushed on dough before baking) can be an egg glaze made with whole eggs or yolks; milk, cream and/or butter glaze (these produce a duller finish); sugar glaze (sugar sprinkled over milk or cream glaze), or any combinations of the above.

High-Altitude Baking

Altitude does not begin to affect baking until above 2,500 feet. Higher than that, the altitude will dry out ingredients, make doughs and batters rise faster, and make liquids boil faster. Generally speaking, pans should be greased more heavily, oven temperatures increased slightly, leaveners and sugar reduced and liquid increased. The actual adjustments needed will depend on the altitude.

Ladyfingers

Ladyfingers are small sponge cakes, about 3 1/2 inches long, used primarily in making **charlottes**. They can be formed with a pastry bag with a plain tip, in a ladyfinger pan or with two spoons.

Lemon Curd

This cooked mixture of lemon juice (and sometimes grated zest), sugar, butter and egg yolks makes a rich, tart spreading cream that can be used as a filling. Many variations exist using other citrus fruits.

Low Fat Cocoa

Cocoa powder containing less than ten percent cocoa butter.

Medium Fat Cocoa

Cocoa powder containing between ten and twenty-two percent cocoa butter.

Meringue

Meringue, a beaten foam of egg whites and sugar, can be used as a pie topping, to lighten other mixtures and, after being baked to a crisp layer or shell, as the foundation of various cakes and desserts (see dacquoise). Simple, uncooked meringue is made by beating egg whites, then beating in the sugar until very stiff, shiny peaks form. Cooked meringue is more stable. Two forms are: Swiss meringue - egg whites and sugar heated over simmering water, then beaten until long, tall peaks form and the meringue is cold; Italian meringue -- sugar syrup cooked to the firm-ball stage, beaten into whipped egg whites, then whipped until cold.

Milk Chocolate

A mixture of chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, milk, sugar, and flavorings. All milk chocolate made in the United States must contain at least 10% chocolate liquor and 12% whole milk.

Nibs

Nibs are the "meat" of the cocoa bean.

Pastry Cream (*Crème Patissière*)

Pastry cream is a cooked mixture made with egg yolks, sugar and milk thickened with flour and/or cornstarch and finished with a little vanilla. Butter is often beaten in at the end to give it a silkier consistency. It is used as a filling or as the creamy layer in a fruit tart. It can be flavored with liqueurs, chocolate or coffee; when flavored with almonds or macaroons, it becomes a frangipane; with the addition of gelatin and Italian meringue, it becomes *crème chiboust*. Lighten pastry cream by folding in 1 part whipped cream to 2 parts pastry cream.

Pastry Dough

Pie dough or flaky pastry is the standard American dough for pies. It can be made with butter, vegetable shortening or lard, but most often a combination of butter and shortening is used. Whatever fat is used, it is rubbed or cut into the flour and then moistened with water to form the dough. Salt is either dissolved in the water or added to the flour at the start. The more finely the fat is rubbed in, the less flaky and more mealy the baked dough will be. *Pâte brisée*, the French equivalent of our pie dough or flaky pastry, uses the same proportions of ingredients, but the fat is always unsalted butter and the liquid may be water, water and egg or all egg. When well made, the pastry is flaky. Sweet dough, or *pâte sucrée*, is made in a similar way with the addition of sugar and sometimes baking powder. It is often used for small tarts where the filling is baked directly in the raw dough. Cookie dough, or *pâte sablée*, is a delicate dough that is usually made by beating the fat with sugar, then mixing in eggs, with the flour (often cake flour) added at the end. This dough is usually baked blind and then filled after it has cooled.

Petits Fours

Petits Fours Secs ("dry" petits fours) are usually thin, delicate cookies often sandwiched with preserves, ganache or praline paste, although plain butter cookies could also fall under this heading. Petits fours glacés are tiny iced cakes sandwiched with preserves, ganache or buttercream and delicately decorated. Petits fours frais are miniature pastries like fruit tarts or eclairs that are filled either with pastry cream or with buttercream.

Phyllo Dough

Phyllo is a tissue-thin pastry dough cut into sheets that is used in Middle Eastern desserts, such as baklava, and is similar to strudel dough. Sheets of phyllo are

brushed with melted butter and layered before baking. Phyllo is increasingly available in the freezer section of supermarkets.

Pound Cake

This is the ultimate butter cake. It gets its name (and texture) from the traditional proportions of its ingredients -- one pound each of butter, sugar, eggs and flour -- although over the years cooks have tinkered with the original formula and baking powder is sometimes added to the batter.

Praline Paste (*Praliné*)

This smooth paste is made by adding equal proportions of skinned hazelnuts (or hazelnuts and almonds) to hot caramel, letting it harden and then pulverizing until creamy. A perfectly smooth praline paste is difficult to make at home, but is available in specialty food shops.

Puff Pastry

This is the multilayered buttery pastry in napoleons and *palmiers*. The thin, crisp, flaky layers are formed when the dough and butter are rolled together, then folded in thirds like a letter and rolled again in a process called a turn; classic puff pastry is "turned" six times, which creates over 1,000 layers of dough (thus the French term *mille-feuille*, which means 1,000 leaves). Well-made puff pastry rises to 5 times its original volume during baking. As it bakes, the water in the dough converts to steam, filling the places previously occupied by the butter, which has already melted and been absorbed by the dough. Preparing the dough from scratch is an exacting process and many people prefer to buy the dough ready made. **Quick puff pastry** is made by tossing large cubes of butter with flour before the water is added to form the dough; the dough is then rolled and folded like puff pastry. Although it does not rise so high as classic puff dough, the quick pastry has the same delicate, flaky texture and can be used for any desserts where the pastry doesn't have to rise as tall.

Royal Icing

This icing is a mixture of confectioners' sugar and egg whites, and it dries hard. It is the traditional icing for English Wedding Cake and is often used to make filigree designs.

Savarin

Made from a yeast dough, like babas, but without the currants, savarins are baked in large or small ring molds, soaked with a syrup usually flavored with rum or kirsch and then painted with a fruit glaze. The center of the ring is filled with whipped cream or pastry cream, and sometimes fresh or poached fruit is added.

Semisweet and Sweet Chocolate

Prepared by blending chocolate liquid with varying amounts of sweetening and added cocoa butter. Flavorings may be included. After processing, the chocolate is cooled. Sweet chocolate is usually molded into bars. Semisweet chocolate is also available in bar form, but most popularly as pieces. This is the generic term. Different manufacturers use different names such as *blocs*, *squares*, *bits*, etc. Chocolate is also granulated and known as "shot," used for decoration by candy makers and confectioners.

Sponge Cake

Sponge cakes are leavened by beating air into whole eggs and sugar or by beating the sugar with the yolks and whites separately. The cakes tend to be fairly lean, even when they contain butter, and are often split into layers, moistened with a flavored sugar syrup and filled.

Strudel Dough

A traditional Viennese strudel dough contains more fat (oil) than phyllo dough and is stretched to a large tissue-thin sheet before being rolled around a filling to make one strudel. Although prepared strudel dough is sometimes hard to find, phyllo can be used in its place to make small strudels (both can be mail-ordered).

Sugar Cooking

When sugar is dissolved in water and brought to a boil, it forms a solution called a syrup. Simple syrup is made with equal quantities of sugar and water. As the syrup boils, the sugar becomes more concentrated and the syrup more dense. The various stages of the cooked sugar solution can be measured with a candy thermometer. Simple syrup is used to moisten cakes, and sugar cooked to various stages is used in the making of fondant, buttercream, boiled icing, and Italian meringue. Sugar cooked to between 320 and 350 degrees becomes caramel, which is used for glazing and making spun sugar, caramel cages and praline paste.

Sweet Dark Chocolate

It contains 15% to 35% chocolate liquor and less than 12% milk solids. It may also contain ingredients like condensed milk, cocoa butter, sugar, and vanilla.

Tart

Tarts are shallow and straight sided (as opposed to sloped-sided American pies) and usually have only a bottom crust, but this is by no means the rule. They are baked in pans with removable bottoms or in flan forms (frames that support the sides of the tart as it bakes on a baking sheet) and are usually served unmolded. Tarts can also be baked free-form on a sheet.

Torte

Torte is the Eastern European name for a cake (pl. *torten*).

Unsweetened chocolate

See Bitter chocolate.

White Chocolate

It is a blend of cocoa butter, milk, sugar, and flavorings. It contains no cocoa solids, and many people don't consider it chocolate at all! According to U.S. Standards of Identity, in order to be called chocolate, it must contain chocolate liquor (but then it wouldn't be white.)