

## To Make Chocolate Cream

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Fashionable chocolate pots and cups were used at Mount Vernon. In 1792, while living in Philadelphia with the president, Martha Washington wrote to her niece Fanny, who lived at the plantation, regarding an order of foodstuffs that were to be sent there: “I wish you would let me know,” Mrs. Washington inquired, “which you will rather have chocolate in cakes or the shells. . . . I will send that you like best.” In 1794 she noted that there were two barrels of chocolate shells in a storeroom at Mount Vernon. Earlier that same year, Burgess Ball, son-in-law of Washington’s brother Charles, wrote to the president requesting

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two or three bushels of the chocolate shells, “such as we’ve frequently drank Chocolate of at Mt. Vernon, as my Wife thinks it agrees with her better than any other Breakfast.”

Posset—a term dating to the fifteenth century—was a warm drink that combined heated milk with some type of spirits, such as wine or beer, and was occasionally enriched with beaten eggs. It was thought to be a remedy for minor ailments, such as a head cold. Its consistency is similar to that of syllabub and eggnog. Posset was served in special cups, as coffee and tea were. Posset cups are unique, however, in having two handles.

This chocolate cream, which is similar to posset, is lusciously thick and rich. Serve it in posset or demitasse cups with a bit of the froth spooned on top. “[L]ay the frothed cream upon them,” Elizabeth Raffald instructed in her recipe. “It makes a pretty picture.”

Makes 5 to 6 cups

1 cup water

5 1/4 ounces semisweet chocolate, grated

3/4 cup sugar, or more as needed

4 cups heavy (whipping) cream

1. In the top of a double boiler, heat the water until very warm. Gradually add the chocolate, stirring constantly until melted. Blend in the sugar, and continue to stir until thoroughly dissolved. Add 1 cup of the cream, and continue to heat, stirring to blend.
2. Transfer the chocolate to a large saucepan, and stir in the remaining cream. Whisk over medium heat until scalding (just below the boiling point).
3. Use a chocolate mill, whisk, or immersion blender to froth the chocolate cream. Pour into posset or demitasse cups, and spoon the froth on top.