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FRECKLED WOODBLOCK CHOCOLATE

MAKES ABOUT 2 PINTS

Woodblock Chocolate owners Jessica and Charley Wheelock were the first bean-to-bar makers in Portland. They do it all: sourcing cocoa beans from farms around the world, roasting them in a nineteenth-century fire roaster, grinding them, and making freak-out-worthy bars. Our goal was a flavor worthy of their craft. We make a simple chocolate ice cream, set off the chocolate with a little sea salt—we love Jacobsen, the first company to harvest salt from the Oregon coast since the era of Lewis and Clark—and stipple scoops with teeny, quick-melting chocolate chips that deliver an immediate rush of flavor.

WHAT WE LEARN: *The chocolate “chips” in these scoops are created by a cool, dead-simple technique called freckling, which can be applied to any ice cream, though it does require [an ice cream machine with a chute](#) or opening that lets you add ingredients while you’re churning. Just pour melted chocolate, spiked with a little oil, into the ice cream right at the end of churning, with the machine still running. The melted chocolate hits the dasher and scatters into a million tiny bits. Not only do they look cool, but these freckles of chocolate are effectively untempered, so unlike typical chocolate chips that stay waxy and flavorless until they finally melt in your mouth, these liquefy the moment they hit your tongue.*

1¼ teaspoons [Jacobsen Oregon Harvested Salt](#) or another flaky sea salt

2 tablespoons granulated sugar

5 ounces single origin Woodblock Chocolate or [another great dark chocolate](#), chopped into chip-size pieces

3 cups Ice Cream Base very cold (See recipe below)

1 teaspoon vegetable oil

In a medium (about 1½-quart) saucepan, heat ¼ cup water, the salt, and the sugar over medium-high heat until the water gives off steam but isn’t yet bubbling, about 1 minute. Remove the pan from the heat, add 3 ounces (about ½ cup) of the chopped chocolate, and stir until the chocolate is completely melted. Let it cool to room temperature. Pour in the ice cream base, then use a whisk or stick blender to mix or blend until smooth. Chill in the fridge until cold if using a pre-frozen bowl machine.

Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and churn just until it has the texture of soft-serve (see note below for timing ranges, depending on the machine).

While the ice cream is churning, pour an inch or so of water into a small saucepan and bring it to a simmer over medium-high heat. Combine the remaining 2 ounces (about 1[⁄]₃ cup) chocolate pieces and

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the vegetable oil in a heatproof bowl that'll sit on top of the saucepan without touching the water. Put the bowl over the saucepan, reduce the heat to low, and heat, stirring occasionally, until the chocolate is completely melted. Take the pan off the heat but leave the bowl on top. The chocolate will stay warm until the ice cream is churned.

Once the ice cream is churned to about soft-serve texture, lift the bowl of melted chocolate from the pan and dry the bottom of the bowl. With the machine still running, pour the melted chocolate through the chute in a very thin, steady stream. The warm chocolate will scatter and harden into freckles when it hits the cold ice cream.

Quickly transfer the ice cream, scraping every last delicious drop from the machine, into freezer-friendly containers. Cover with parchment paper, pressing it to the surface of the ice cream so it adheres, then cover with a lid. It's okay if the parchment hangs over the rim. Store it in the coldest part of your freezer (farthest from the door) until firm, at least 6 hours. It will keep for up to 3 months.

ICE CREAM BASE

Makes About 3 Cups

½ cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons dry milk powder
¼ teaspoon xanthan gum (**See Note**)
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
1½ cups whole milk
1½ cups heavy cream

Combine the sugar, dry milk, and xanthan gum in a small bowl and stir well.

Pour the corn syrup into a medium pot and stir in the whole milk. Add the sugar mixture and immediately whisk vigorously until smooth. Set the pot over medium heat and cook, stirring often and adjusting the heat if necessary to prevent a simmer, until the sugar has fully dissolved, about 3 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat.

Add the cream and whisk until fully combined. Transfer the mixture to an airtight container and refrigerate until well chilled, at least 6 hours, or for even better texture and flavor, 24 hours. Stir the base back together if it separates during the resting time. The base can be further stored in the fridge for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 3 months. (Just be sure to fully thaw the frozen base before using it.)

continued...

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Note: *THE SECRET SUPERHERO OF ICE CREAM*

Every recipe in this book uses xanthan gum in its base. Now, I know what you're thinking (it's exactly what I thought when I first heard of it): "Xanthan gum" sounds funny. It starts with an "x"! It must be impossible to find and it must be bad. Well, it's not and it's not! It's easy to get, not just online but at most supermarkets. It's sold by ubiquitous brands like Bob's Red Mill and Hodgson Mill. Second, although that "x" makes it sound especially unnatural, xanthan gum is no stranger than cornstarch or baking soda.

Xanthan gum has one vital purpose at Salt & Straw: We use it to combat heat shock. To think about how, consider the effect that the more familiar gelatin has on water. Like xanthan gum, gelatin is a hydrocolloid. And as anyone who has made Jell-O knows, gelatin can halt the flow of water. While technically xanthan gum's actual effect on water is slightly different, the upshot is the same. It inhibits the mobility of the melted ice crystals (a.k.a. water) in ice cream, so the water has a harder time migrating to and refreezing onto those remaining crystals, making undesirable growth produced by heat shock less likely.

Some large companies use xanthan and other gums to mimic the texture of fat as well—so they can cut back on pricey cream—but the crutch comes with its own cost. Leaning too heavily on the stuff gives the product a gummy, teeth-coating texture that lingers on your palate a bit too long, like that guy at the party who hangs out after everyone else has gone home. Just the right amount of xanthan gum, on the other hand, is miraculous. At no cost to ice cream quality, you get insurance against ice crystal growth, bumpers in the bowling lane of perfection, a little leeway for when the world inevitably conspires against you. It's the lone ice cream-making decision at Salt & Straw that makes our lives easier, not harder. And being freed from that worry lets us be more daring on other fronts. My hope is that the freedom encourages you to make more ice cream! And while most homemade ice creams are best eaten within a few days, xanthan gum is one of the reasons why the ice creams in this book keep for three months!

CHURNING NOTES

THE THREE TYPES OF ICE CREAM MAKERS

I recommend a 1½-quart capacity machine for these recipes, though, as overloading a 1-quart machine can prevent your ice cream from freezing properly.

HAND-CRANK

Churning Time: Hand-crank machines will generally turn your liquid mixture to ice cream in 5 to 15 minutes, depending on your arm strength.

Hot Cold Tip: If you use a hand-crank device, try this: Rather than a mixture of ice and salt, use ice and an intense salt brine (a one-to-one salt-to-water ratio by volume). That gets things cooler quicker.

FROZEN BOWL

Churning Time: Frozen-bowl machines will generally turn your liquid mixture to ice cream in 20 to 30 minutes, provided that the mixture you use is already very cold from the fridge,

INTERNAL COMPRESSOR

Churning Time: Most machines with an internal compressor will turn your liquid mixture to ice cream in 30 to 40 minutes. Super-fancy ones will take 12 to 18 minutes.

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