

Chocolate Rochers with Hazelnuts and Cornflakes

For lovers of chocolate like me, this is an ideal recipe for the holidays. Rochers is a French word meaning rocks, or little boulders, which is what these little chocolate confections look like. My friend, the chocolate king Jacques Torres, makes something similar, which gave me this idea. Here, some of the rochers are studded with cornflakes and some with hazelnuts, but Rice Krispies, dried cherries, granola, or any other dried fruit or cereal can be used in the same manner. The rochers can be smaller or larger, based on your own tastes, and you can make them with semisweet chocolate morsels or milk chocolate or bittersweet chocolate. I like bittersweet best because it is high in cocoa content and not too sweet.

35 to 55, Depending on Size

- 12 ounces bittersweet chocolate
- 1 1/2 cups whole hazelnuts or almonds
- 2 1/2 cups cornflakes or Rice Krispies

Break the chocolate into 1-inch pieces and put them in a glass bowl. Microwave on high for about 1 1/2 minutes. At this point, the chocolate may look like it has not started to melt. Wait 4 to 5 minutes and microwave the chocolate again for 1 minute. (Waiting helps prevent the chocolate from scorching or burning.) Stir after the second minute in the microwave; the chocolate should be almost melted. Wait a few more minutes and microwave the chocolate again for 30 seconds. Stir with a rubber spatula. The chocolate should be glossy and smooth. (You should have about 1 cup melted chocolate.)

For hazelnut rochers: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Scatter the hazelnuts or almonds on a cookie sheet and toast for 7 to 8 minutes. Do not worry about the skin. Transfer the nuts to a medium bowl and pour about 1/2 cup of the melted chocolate on top. Mix well with a spoon to coat the nuts with the chocolate. Line a cookie sheet with plastic wrap.

Using a tablespoon, scoop up a spoonful of the chocolate-hazelnut mixture and push the dough off the tablespoon with a teaspoon onto the lined cookie sheet. Repeat, making 15 to 25 rochers, depending on size. Cool until hardened. (Stored in an airtight container, the rochers will keep for 2 to 3 weeks in the refrigerator or up to 2 months in the freezer.)

For cornflake rochers: Put the cornflakes in a medium bowl and add the remaining 1/2 cup melted chocolate. Mix well with a spoon until combined. Do not worry if the cornflakes break somewhat; keep mixing until they are coated. Spoon the small mounds onto the lined cookie sheet. You will have 20 to 30, depending on size. Cool until hardened. (These can also be frozen.)