

Mendiants

<http://userealbutter.com/2018/12/10/mendiants-recipe/>

dark chocolate, milk chocolate, or white chocolate*

*You can melt any amount of chocolate, but to temper the chocolate, it's going to be easiest to work with a minimum of 1 pound of chocolate.

toppings

dried fruits (apricots, cranberries, currants, berries, figs, etc.)
candied fruits (kumquat slices, ginger, lemon peel, orange peel, mango, etc.)
toasted coconut flakes, dried edible rose petals
candied edible flowers (violets, rose, etc.)
cocoa nibs
flake sea salt
nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pistachios, etc.)
freeze-dried fruit (strawberries, raspberries, etc.)

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a silpat liner. Melt or temper your chocolate to the appropriate temperature (see notes below). Drop about 1 tablespoon of chocolate at a time to create a 1.5-inch disk on the parchment or silpat, leaving enough room for the disks to spread without touching their neighbors. I like to use an icing bag or piping bottle, but if the chocolate cools, it will plug up the vessel. Create 12 at a time, then place your toppings in the center of each disk while the chocolate is still wet, so they stick. Don't overcrowd the mendiants with too much stuff. Repeat until the chocolate runs out or until you have as many as you want. Or if you have an assistant, one person can lay down the chocolate disks while the other follows with the toppings (this is probably ideal). Allow the disks to cool completely.

Tempering dark chocolate: For the seed method of tempering, place all but 10 chocolate chips or chocolate pieces in the top of a double boiler or in a large heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water (about 2 inches deep). Make sure the bowl is wider than the pan because you don't want water getting into the chocolate or all of it will seize. Stir until the chocolate has melted completely, monitoring the temperature of the chocolate. When it reaches 112°F, remove the bowl from the water bath (it will continue to rise – that's fine because we are targeting a final temperature of 118-120°F) and set it on an ice pack or a larger bowl of ice to start cooling it. Stir the chocolate constantly to promote proper cocoa butter crystal formation for tempering. Continue to monitor the temperature. When the chocolate reaches 95°F, remove the bowl from the ice pack or ice bath and toss in the chocolate chips. This is called seeding and should encourage the formation of good crystals for tempering. Keep stirring until the chocolate reaches 91°F. Secure the bowl of tempered chocolate to the side of the sous vide tub, making sure the chocolate in the bowl is below the water level outside of the bowl.

To temper milk or white chocolate: Follow the directions above for dark chocolate except milk and white chocolates should target a high temperature of 116-118°F (remove from hot water bath at 110°F), seeding at 95°F and perhaps again at 90°F, and they are in temper between 85 and 87°F. You must use high quality white chocolate – any white chocolate that uses palm kernel oil or coconut oil won't temper (it will separate and be unusable).