French Fancies
Makes 16 – Fondant Fancies

My inspiration for these designs comes from an old French patisserie book I used to study during my training at Le Cordon Bleu. The piped chocolate designs have an appealing retro-feel and are easy to achieve with simple piping techniques. This type of fondant fancy is also known as a ‘petit four’, from the French for oven, and is traditionally layered with lots of very thin slices of sponge and butter cream. I used a wonderfully fragrant orange sponge with orange butter cream.

Ingredients

• 16 Fondant Fancies dipped variously in pastel pink, yellow, blue, green and lilac fondant icing, made from a 20cm square Victoria sponge flavoured with orange zest and filled with 3 layers of orange butter cream

• 200g couverture chocolate buttons

• 1 tablespoon royal icing

• Dark brown food colour (I use paste colour from Sugar Flair)

• Small amount of water

Equipment

• Small microwaveable bowl

• Microwave cooker

• Digital thermometer

• Small palette knife

• J-cloth

• Wire rack

• Greaseproof paper

• Paper piping bag

• Pair of scissors

To Temper The Chocolate

1. Place 150g of the chocolate buttons in a microwaveable bowl and melt it gently on medium heat.

Be careful not to overheat it as chocolate can burn easily. Check the temperature with a thermometer; it should be melted and between 44 and 48°C.

2. Once it has reached the required temperature, stir the remaining chocolate buttons into the melted chocolate and this will cool it down to 28°C.

3. Once the chocolate has cooled down to 28°C, gently warm it up again to between 32 and 34°C. The chocolate should now be tempered. You can test it by dipping the blade of a palette knife into it – it should set on the blade within a few minutes and have a silky satiny texture.
• To Dip The Fondant Fancies

4. Once the chocolate has been tempered, have a dampened J-cloth at hand, slightly wet your fingers with it and pick up one fondant fancy at a time (this will stop your fingers from sticking to the fondant) and dip the bottom into the chocolate until well covered.

5. Place each on a wire rack for a few minutes to allow excess chocolate to drip off and then transfer it to a sheet of greaseproof paper to let it set.

To Finish

6. Mix the royal icing with the dark brown food colour and a bit of water to a soft-peak consistency. Put it into a piping bag.

7. Snip a small tip off the bag and pipe the different designs directly on to the fondant fancies.

8. To store: keep at room temperature for about 3-5 days.

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