appendix

GLOSSARY

Throughout this book and in the world of baking, you will come across terms that are unfamiliar and may sound intimidating. Here is a glossary of some that you should know in order to perfect your baking knowledge.

BLOOM: In the baking world, bloom has two definitions. 1) To "bloom gelatin" is to rehydrate it in water to soften it and make it useable. 2) "Bloom" also refers to the white spots sometimes seen on chocolate. The bloom is actually the whitish cocoa butter or sugar in the chocolate separating itself from the cocoa mass.

CARAMELIZE: To heat sugar (or a substance that contains sugar) until it turns brown

CORNET: A small paper cone used for writing and making small line decorations on cakes and other baked goods with icing (see "Decorating with Icing")

CREAM (VERB): To mix sugar and butter together to incorporate air into them. This results in a lighter texture in baked goods. You will often see instructions in a recipe to "cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy." It's important to stop when you've reached the fluffy stage, because if you continue beating, the mixture will lose the air bubbles and the purpose will be defeated.

CRYSTALLIZATION: When sugar and water are melted together over heat to make a syrup, there is a limit to how much sugar can be dissolved. When the syrup reaches that limit, it is said to be saturated. If the syrup goes beyond the saturation point, the excess sugar un-dissolves and reverts to a crystalline

form. A syrup that has "crystallized" will make whatever candy (or other mixture) it is used in grainy.

CUT IN: This is a method for adding cold butter or other solid fat to flour. It's done by hand with your fingers, with a pastry blender, or by using two knives (used like scissors, cross-cutting the fat into the flour). The end result is a shaggy dough with pea-size pieces of fat dispersed throughout. You'll see this method called for in making pie crusts and sometimes scones.

EGG WASH: A mixture of eggs with either milk or water, used to brush on uncooked dough before baking. The wash creates a sheen and golden brown color. A typical egg wash is 2 eggs whisked with 1 tablespoon water or milk.

GLUTEN: This is a protein found in wheat flour. To activate the gluten, liquid is added to flour to form a dough (as for bread) and the dough is then kneaded. The kneading action develops the gluten, giving the dough structure and stretch. The more you knead, the more the gluten is developed.

ICE BATH: A bowl of cold water and ice, used to cool down hot liquids. The bowl containing the hot liquid is set directly into the ice bath.

MEDIUM PEAKS: A stage of whipping between soft peaks and stiff peaks (see below)

NAPPÉ: A French term that describes the stage in which a sauce has thickened enough to "coat the back of a spoon"

PROOF: Proof has two meanings in baking. The first is the process of testing to see if the yeast you are using is still active: Sprinkle it over warm (105° to 110°F) water, usually with a pinch of sugar, to see if the yeast starts to bubble. This is the "proof" that the yeast is alive and well. But in professional baking, the word "proof" also means to let a yeast-based dough rest and grow in size (home cooks usually call this "letting the dough rise"). Proofing is ideally done in an environment of 90° to 100°F. Always cover the dough to be proofed. Tip: Preheat your oven to 350°F, shut it off, then stick

the dough that needs to rise in the oven and leave the oven door open.

RIBBON STAGE: This describes when egg yolks, or a combination of yolks and sugar, have reached their full volume potential through whipping. You know this has been achieved when the whisk is lifted in the air and the mixture falls back into the bowl, creating a ribbon that loops back on top of itself.

SIFT: To pass dry ingredients through a sieve, sifter, or other fine screen. There are two main reasons for sifting: 1) To evenly mix a group of dry ingredients, such as baking powder and soda, with flour, and 2) to eliminate any clumps or lumps in the dry ingredient(s).

SIMPLE SYRUP: A liquid made by dissolving sugar in water over heat. It's always a 1:1 ratio of water to sugar. It's useful for many dessert applications and should be in every pastry chef's repertoire. Simple syrup will keep in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.

SOFT PEAKS: A stage reached by beaten egg whites or cream. To test, lift the whisk or beater out of the mixture; the whipped substance holds a peak that just barely stands and then falls to the side.

STIFF PEAKS: A stage reached by beaten egg whites or cream. To test, lift the whisk or beater out of the mixture; the whipped substance forms a peak that stands straight up.

SUGAR STAGES: When you cook sugar and water, the water evaporates and the sugar slowly cooks to different stages with different properties. The most common sugar stages used in baking are soft ball, hard crack, and caramel. These stages describe how the sugar will set after it has been cooked. In this book, I use the soft ball stage to make buttercream frostings and fudge; hard crack stage is used to make Sugar Lollipops; and sugar is taken to the caramel stage for the Chocolate-Caramel Hot Cocoa Mix. The best way to monitor this is with a candy thermometer, but there are also visual tests that the cook can use.

- Soft Ball: 238° to 240°F. Tested by dropping a small amount of the hot syrup into cold water. It should hold the shape of a ball and be pliable and soft, hence soft ball.
- Hard Crack: 300° to 310°F. Tested by dropping a small amount of the hot syrup onto a plate. It should quickly set up hard and will crack.
- Caramel: 320° to 348°F. The sugar will turn a golden brown color.

TEMPER (VERB): What you do when you have to combine two substances of different temperatures. The most common situation is when you have to add hot milk to cold eggs. After the milk is heated, you slowly add some of it to the cold eggs while constantly whisking, bringing the eggs closer to the temperature of the milk. Then the mixture can be added back to the remaining hot milk. (If you add the hot milk to the eggs too rapidly, they will cook and be unusable in your recipe.)

WATER BATH: Some baked custards (like the cheesecakes in this book) and puddings require moist, gentle heat to prevent them from cracking. A water bath is a deep pan filled halfway with water that heats in the oven and creates both steam and a more gentle, even heat. Here are some tips for a successful water bath.

- If making something in a springform pan (like cheesecake), make sure to wrap the outside of the pan tightly with foil to seal off the seams of the springform pan. This keeps water from getting into the pan.
- Place the custard, cheesecake, or pudding in a roasting pan big enough to hold the pan (or custard cups) comfortably. Place the roasting pan on a pulled-out oven rack. Fill the roasting pan with hot water to come halfway up the sides of whatever you are baking. Then carefully slide the oven rack in.
- Let cheesecake cool completely in the water bath before removing it. But take out custards and puddings to cool.

ZEST: The very thin colored outer layer of citrus peels. The spongy white underneath of the peel, known as the pith, is often bitter and unappetizing, so be careful to only use the zest of the fruit when called for.