

CLEO COYLE'S *SENSUOUS AS SIN* CHOCOLATE-COVERED CINNAMON STICKS



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Served with coffee, espresso, or tea, this elegant treat has very few calories yet it offers amazing flavor. All three ingredients (chocolate, cinnamon, and coffee) have long been considered aphrodisiacs, and the way you consume them in this dessert is quite sensuous, making it a perfectly romantic recipe for Valentine's Day.

Ingredients:

½ cup chocolate chips (or 4 ounces block chocolate, chopped)
12 cinnamon sticks (the longer the better)

Step 1 - First select your chocolate. Because no sugar is added to this recipe, use a chocolate that has sugar in it, such as white, milk, semi-sweet, or Mexican. A bittersweet chocolate (one with a very high cocoa percentage) may be tasty in a cake or cookie, but you're adding sugar to those recipes. To many people, dark (or baking) chocolate will be too bitter for this recipe.

Step 2 – Prepare drying area: When the chocolate-covered sticks are wet, they'll drip melted chocolate, so you'll need to prep a safe area for the sticks to dry. Here are two solutions: (A) egg carton and (B) wax paper.

A. Egg carton method: Remove top from egg carton. Place on large dish. Using a knife, make a small incision in carton top. To make sure incision is large enough, insert one end of cinnamon stick into the carton. Repeat for all 12 sticks. Although my photo shows top and bottom of carton, the sticks tend to move around more on the bottoms. Use top only.)



B. Wax paper method: Place wax paper over a large, flat dish. The only drawback with this method is appearance. Your chocolate-covered cinnamon sticks will still taste delicious but there will be a funny sort of flat side to your stick (see bottom stick in photo at right). If you want prettier sticks that resemble the one on top, then use my method A (the egg carton). **NOTE:** Cinnamon sticks come in different sizes so shop for the longest you can find. Also: If you have no wax paper, do not use paper towels or a naked dish. The chocolate will adhere to these surfaces and your sticks will be ruined. Parchment paper and aluminum foil are better alternatives.



Step 3 – Melt Chocolate: Place ½ cup chocolate chips (or about 4 ounces of block chocolate, chopped) into a microwave safe bowl. I use my Pyrex measuring cup. **WARNING:** Chocolate burns easily, especially white and milk chocolates, which have more milk solids, so you need to be careful when you melt in a microwave. Nuke it for about 20 seconds. Remove the bowl and stir (make sure the spoon is dry because moisture will make the chocolate seize up). The chocolate won't be completely melted yet, but stir it to prevent burning. Now microwave it for another 10 seconds. Remove and stir again. Continue this process until the chocolate is completely melted.



Step 4 – Dip sticks: One at a time, dip one end of each cinnamon stick into the melted chocolate. Allow excess chocolate to drip off the stick, back into the bowl. Spin the stick around slowly until the drips stop completely. Now place the clean end of the stick (the end you're holding) into the prepared egg carton.

Step 5 – Wait: The chocolate must dry and harden. Do not touch for about an hour. To speed up this process, carefully move the dish (on which you've placed either the egg carton or wax paper) into the refrigerator for about 30 minutes.



To serve: Once the chocolate hardens, you're ready to use. Lightly stir the chocolate-covered stick into your cup of hot coffee (tea, espresso, or cocoa). Stir only enough to re-warm the chocolate. Place the stick into your mouth like a lollipop and enjoy the taste on your lips and tongue. The flavors of warm chocolate and cinnamon combine with the coffee to create a lovely after-dinner sensation. It's a deliciously fun and sensuous dessert experience with very few calories.

To store: Place chocolate-covered sticks in a plastic baggie and keep in your refrigerator.



See a nice serving idea pictured right. Place the chocolate-covered cinnamon sticks in a wine glass with the chocolate ends facing down. Guests can help themselves to this complement for their after-dinner coffee, espresso, or tea.



Eat with Joy!
~ Cleo Coyle

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