

# Preserving chocolate



*Today, chocolate is known as a product that is usually consumed in a short space of time. There is a wide variety of chocolates with differing taste, quality and price. It is unfortunate that Grand cru chocolates or chocolates prepared by professional chocolatiers lose their original organoleptic qualities due to them not being conserved properly.*

*Some signs are unmistakable indicating that the chocolate was not stored according to some basic rules these include whitening, deformation, texture modification, taste and condensation.*

Besides the hygienic risks, there are also the following factors which need to be considered to achieve an ideal conservation of chocolate:

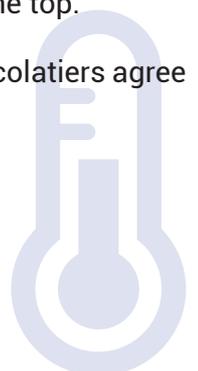
- **Storage temperature**
- **Humidity**
- **Light**
- **Air**
- **Aroma**
- **The shelf life**

## STORAGE TEMPERATURE

Chocolate is composed of a significant portion of fat necessary for its structure, so it is sensitive to temperature variations and temperatures greater than 20 ° C.

Accordingly, avoid keeping it close to heat sources (radiators, lamps, ovens, windows ...) or in areas where the temperature may vary (non-regulated storage areas, reheating too quickly...). This will cause the chocolate molecules to destruct. It can also cause deformation and whitening due to fats resurfacing to the top.

Chocolate must be stored at a constant temperature between 10 and 20 ° C. The majority of chocolatiers agree **it should be stored it at a constant temperature between 15 ° C and 18 ° C.**



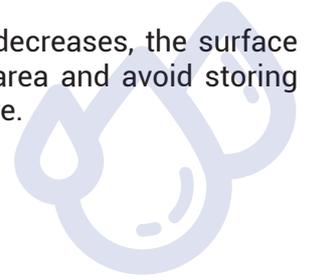
### HUMIDITY CONTROL

Whatever the type of chocolate product to preserve, humidity must be as constant as possible because chocolate tends to absorb it due to its sugar content. Wet storage with too much moisture will produce a dry whitening on the surface because of the sugar crystallization.

Relative humidity (RH) depends on the storage temperature and the product being stored.

In general, dry products such as praline chocolates require a relative humidity between 50-60%. For products containing more moisture such as ganache, the humidity must be between 65-70%.

To avoid condensation, be aware that when the temperature of chocolate products decreases, the surface humidity has a tendency to increase. We must control the humidity of the storage area and avoid storing chocolates directly on the ground or against a wall so they do not absorb more moisture.



### LIGHT, AIR AND AROMA'S

Chocolate has a tendency to oxidize when it is exposed too long to air or light. Its fat is broken down and becomes rancid and this alters the taste and sometimes the smell. More importantly, it can easily absorb odors. To avoid this, chocolates should be stored in an airtight container with opaque packaging.



### TIPS BEFORE TASTING

Before tasting chocolates, they must be allowed to reheat slowly in their packaging at room temperature. Eating them before when they are too cold might hide their aromas. Ambient reheating will allow moisture to collect on the box and not on the chocolates.



### WHAT IS THE IDEAL SHELF LIFE?

Although for some products this question does not apply, the ideal is to eat chocolates as soon as possible. The shelf life varies depending on the type of chocolate and its composition..

For blocks or chocolate coins:

- Dark chocolate: 18 months maximum
- Milk chocolate: 12 months maximum
- White chocolate: 6 months



If consumed past the use by date, the quality of the chocolate will deteriorate but it will not be harmful to a person's health, it is therefore advertised as a « best before date ». **Warning: for sweets and chocolate confectionery, these times are drastically reduced according to their composition (cream, dried fruit, marzipan alcohol ...).**

For candies with dried fruits, their oil may migrate, so do not exceed 6 months. For those containing alcohol, they can also be stored for up to 6 months, otherwise they will dry out and crystallize. Ganache should be consumed within 15 days to avoid drying out. For cream-based sweets like truffles they should not exceed 10 days. The oil in the filling can migrate which will cause the inside of the truffle to dry out.

In order for professional chocolatiers to provide their customers with high quality chocolates with an unparalleled taste and appearance, Hengel proposes chocolate storage cabinet with precise humidity and temperature management. To avoid deterioration due to light, the cabinet is opaque and airtight. Wickets allow chocolate to be stored by different variety.



#### Sources :

*French - Guide des bonnes pratiques pour la conservation des produits de chocolat édité par le Syndicat du Chocolat et la Confédération Nationale des Chocolatiers –Confiseurs*  
[http://circulaire.legifrance.gouv.fr/pdf/2009/04/cir\\_2597.pdf](http://circulaire.legifrance.gouv.fr/pdf/2009/04/cir_2597.pdf)