

Chocolate 'Curtains' Bring Dippy Rules

by Lori Borgman

Being a first-timer to the chocolate fountain, I was a little nervous. For those unfamiliar with the latest party phenomena, a chocolate fountain is basically a fondue pot engineered to explode like a volcano. Chocolate shoots up through a center pipe, then cascades down in three tiers, or "curtains of chocolate" as the professionals call them. Actually, I was perfectly relaxed about the whole chocolate fountain experience until the hostess began giving instructions. There are always two things that concern me regarding party food. The first is when the food you are about to eat requires instructions, and the second is when the instructions involve any sort of search and rescue. First, the hostess pointed out the strawberries, pineapples, bananas, pretzel sticks and cake cubes for dipping, or "dippers" as she called them. So far, so good, we have curtains of chocolate and dippers, and I'm tracking pretty well. Then the hostess said, "Should you lose one of your dippers in the fountain, you should immediately yell, 'Man overboard!'" This would signal the hostess to dive under the serving table and rip the fountain plug from the electrical outlet. She would then retrieve the sinking piece of fruit to avert it from plugging the fountain pump, lay it on a paper towel and begin artificial resuscitation. At least I think that's what she said. Naturally, a few of us novice types were on edge now. Nobody wanted to be the one with a dipper falling overboard and responsible for the ensuing commotion. The big question was how to approach the three-tiered cascading curtain of chocolate with minimal risk to you and your dipper. Do you stick the skewered fruit directly in from the front, ease it in from the side, or put it in a little orange life jacket and let it float in the swirl of chocolate coursing at the fountain's base? It turned out the dipping was simple compared to the eating. Think about it. Parents are on continual lookout for small children covertly carrying chocolate that may melt and make a hideous mess, but now trendsetters think licking melted chocolate dripping off chunks of juicy fruit is a good idea for adults, who just happen to have far poorer reflexes and much slower reaction times. We had not been eating and dipping long when the young woman to my left kindly informed me that I had a string of chocolate hanging from my lower lip. "Thank you," I said. "And you have a small curtain of chocolate plastered to your chin." She wiped her chin, and in the process, smeared chocolate on the side of her hand, which brushed against her cheek, leaving a track of chocolate that ran the length of her face and skidded to a stop by the corner of her eye. She was wearing the panel, the valance and the tie back to the curtain of chocolate. I called "Woman Overboard" and dove to retrieve a compact with a mirror from my purse sitting on the floor. After substantial clean up, I was about to put the mirror away, when she noted I had a new smudge of chocolate on my chin. Dabbing at the spot on my chin, I realized what the problem was. I was both working from a three-tiered fountain when I should have been relegated to the kiddie pool. Lori Borgman is the author of "All Stressed up and No Place To Go." Comments may be sent to her at lori@loriborgman.com.

Chocolate 'Curtains' Bring Dippy Rules by Lori Borgman