

CLAIMS

1. A method for preparing a chocolate product, the process comprising:
 - (a) providing a mixture, said mixture comprising:
 - (i) one or more cocoa components, preferably including cocoa butter;
 - (ii) a non-reducing sugar;
 - (iii) one or more reducing sugars; and
 - (iv) water;
 - and
 - (b) mechanically agitating the mixture at a temperature at which the mixture is in a liquid state and/or at a temperature of at least 40 °C.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said providing the mixture comprises:
 - (I) preparing a pre-mixture, said pre-mixture comprising at least part of said one or more cocoa components, at least part of said non-reducing sugar, at least part of said one or more reducing sugars, and water; and
 - (II) heating the pre-mixture at a temperature of at least 90 °C, preferably of at least 100 °C, and/or heating said pre-mixture at a temperature sufficiently high to effect evaporation of at least part of the water in the pre-mixture.
3. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said method further comprises:
 - (c) aging the mixture resulting from (b), preferably at a temperature below 40 °C.
- ~~4. The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said one or more cocoa components include cocoa butter.~~
- ~~5. The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said mixture comprises a chocolate-compatible fat.~~
- ~~84.~~ 4. The method according to any preceding claim, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more reducing sugars is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis, or:
- ~~9. The method according to any preceding claim, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more reducing sugars is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33 on a weight basis.~~
- ~~10. The method according to any preceding claim, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more reducing sugars is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.~~

- ~~115.~~ The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said one or more reducing sugars include one or more monosaccharides, preferably including glucose.
- ~~12.~~ The method according to claim 11, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more monosaccharides is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.
- ~~13.~~ The method according to claim 11 or 12, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more monosaccharides is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.
- ~~14.~~ The method according to any one of claims 11 to 13, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more monosaccharides is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.
- ~~15.~~ The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said one or more reducing sugars include glucose.
- ~~16.~~ The method according to claim 15, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to glucose is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.
- ~~17.~~ The method according to claim 15 or 16, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to glucose is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.
- ~~18.~~ The method according to any one of claims 15 to 17, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to glucose is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.
- ~~196.~~ The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said non-reducing sugar is sucrose.
- ~~20.~~ The method according to any preceding claim, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of sucrose to said one or more reducing sugars is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.
- ~~21.~~ The method according to any preceding claim, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of sucrose to said one or more reducing sugars is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33 on a weight basis.
- ~~22.~~ The method according to any preceding claim, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of sucrose to said one or more reducing sugars is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.
- ~~23.~~ The method according any one of claims 19 to 22, wherein said one or more reducing sugars include one or more monosaccharides.

- ~~24.— The method according to claim 23, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of sucrose to said one or more monosaccharides is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~25.— The method according to claim 23 or 24, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of sucrose to said one or more monosaccharides is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~26.— The method according to any one of claims 23 to 25, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of sucrose to said one or more monosaccharides is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~27.— The method according to any one of claims 19 to 26, wherein said one or more reducing sugars include glucose.~~
- ~~28.— The method according to claim 27, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of sucrose to glucose is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~29.— The method according to claim 27 or 28, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of sucrose to glucose is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~30.— The method according to any one of claims 27 to 29, wherein, in said mixture, the ratio of sucrose to glucose is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.~~
- 31.7. The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the water content in the mixture is less than 25 wt.% with respect to the weight of the mixture, preferably between 4 and 20 wt.% with respect to the weight of the mixture.**
- ~~32.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the water content in the mixture is between 5 and 18 wt.%, preferably between 6 and 15 wt.% with respect to the weight of the mixture.~~
- ~~33.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said mechanically agitating is by stirring and/or kneading.~~
- ~~34.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said mechanically agitating is effected at a temperature of at least 40 °C, preferably between 40 and 85 °C.~~
- ~~35.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said mechanically agitating is effected at a temperature between 45 and 80 °C, more preferably between 50 and 75 °C.~~
- ~~36.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said mechanically agitating is effected for at least 0.5 minutes, preferably for at least 1 minute, more preferably at least 2 minutes.~~

- ~~37.—The method according to any preceding claim, wherein said mechanically agitating is effected such as to obtain a homogeneous mixture.~~
- ~~38.—The method according to any one of claims 2-37, wherein heating the pre-mixture in (II) is at a temperature of at least 90 °C, preferably of at least 100 °C.~~
- ~~39.—The method according to any one of claims 2-38, wherein heating the pre-mixture in (II) is at a temperature sufficiently high to effect evaporation of at least part of the water in the pre-mixture.~~
- ~~40.—The method according to any one of claims 2-39, wherein the method further comprises — (III) cooling the mixture resulting from (II), for instance in a vessel, in a cooling tunnel or with a cooling surface.~~
418. The method according to any one of claims 2-407, wherein the method further comprises, after (II) or after (III), adding further cocoa components to the pre-mixture.
429. The method according to any preceding, claim, wherein the mixture comprises less than 80 wt.% of cocoa components, preferably between 5 and 80 wt.% of cocoa components with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water, or:
- ~~43.—The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture comprises between 5 and 60 wt.%, preferably between 10 and 50 wt.% of cocoa components with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water.~~
- ~~44.—The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture comprises at least 20 wt.%, more preferably at least 30 wt.% of cocoa components with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water.~~
- ~~45.—The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture comprises at least 35 wt.%, more preferably at least 40 wt.% of cocoa components with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water.~~
- ~~46.—The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture comprises between 5 and 60 wt.% of cocoa butter with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water.~~
- ~~47.—The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture comprises between 5 and 40 wt.% of cocoa butter, preferably between 10 and 35 wt.% of cocoa butter, more preferably between 15 and 30 wt.% of cocoa butter with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water.~~
- ~~48.—The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture comprises between 10 and 70 wt.% of said non-reducing sugar, with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water.~~

- ~~49.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture comprises between 25 and 70 wt.% of said non-reducing sugar, preferably between 35 and 65 wt.%, more preferably between 40 and 60 wt.% of said non-reducing sugar with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water.~~
- ~~50.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture comprises between 10 and 70 wt.% of sucrose with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water.~~
- ~~51.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture comprises between 25 and 70 wt.% of sucrose, preferably between 35 and 65 wt.%, more preferably between 40 and 60 wt.% of sucrose with respect to the weight of the mixture, excluding water.~~
- ~~52.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture does not contain any sucrose ester.~~
- ~~53.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture does not comprise any hydrocolloid.~~
- ~~54.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture does not comprise any emulsifier.—~~
- ~~55.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the mixture further comprises milk fat.~~
- ~~56.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein at least part of the water originates from milk, preferably wherein the method comprises providing at least part of the water by admixing milk to obtain the mixture and/or pre-mixture.~~
- ~~57.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the method comprises providing at least part of the cocoa components by admixing cocoa liquor, cocoa mass and/or conched chocolate to obtain the mixture or pre-mixture.~~
- ~~58.— The method according to any one of claims 3 to 57, wherein said aging results in a chocolate product comprising a sugar network.~~
- ~~59.— The method according to any one of claims 3 to 58, wherein said aging results in a heat resistant chocolate product.~~
- ~~60.— The method according to claim 59, wherein the heat resistant chocolate product does not melt when kept in an oven at 40 °C for a period of at least 30 minutes.~~
- ~~61~~10. The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the resulting chocolate product is not an emulsion or does not comprise an emulsion.
- ~~62.— The method according to any preceding claim, wherein the chocolate product is in the solid state.~~

~~63. The method according to any one of claim 1 to 61, wherein the chocolate product is mouldable.~~

~~64~~11. A chocolate product obtainable by the method according to any one of claims 1 to ~~63~~10.

~~65~~12. A chocolate product comprising:

- (I) one or more cocoa components, preferably including cocoa butter;
- (II) a non-reducing sugar;
- (III) one or more reducing sugars; and
- (IV) water

wherein said chocolate product comprises between 4 and 20 wt.% of water with respect to the weight of the chocolate product, preferably between 6 and 15 wt.% of water with respect to the weight of the chocolate product, ~~or~~ or

~~66. The chocolate product according to claim 64 or 65, wherein said chocolate product comprises between 6 and 12 wt.% of water with respect to the weight of the chocolate product, preferably between 7 and 10 wt.% of water with respect to the weight of the chocolate product.~~

~~67. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 66, wherein said one or more cocoa components include cocoa butter.~~

~~68. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 67, wherein said chocolate product comprises a chocolate compatible fat.~~

~~69~~13. The chocolate product according to any one of claims ~~64-11~~ to ~~68~~12, wherein the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more reducing sugars is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis, ~~or~~ or.

~~70. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 69, wherein the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more reducing sugars is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.~~

~~71. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 70, wherein the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more reducing sugars is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.~~

~~72~~14. The chocolate product according to any one of claims ~~64-11~~ to ~~71~~13, wherein said one or more reducing sugars include one or more monosaccharides, preferably including glucose.

- ~~73.— The chocolate product according to claim 72, wherein the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more monosaccharides is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~74.— The chocolate product according to claim 72 or 73, wherein the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more monosaccharides is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~75.— The chocolate product according to any one of claims 72 to 74, wherein the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said one or more monosaccharides is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~76.— The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 75, wherein said one or more reducing sugars include glucose.~~
- ~~77.— The chocolate product according to claim 76, wherein the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said glucose is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~78.— The chocolate product according to claim 76 or 77, wherein the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said glucose is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~79.— The chocolate product according to any one of claims 76 to 78, wherein the ratio of said non-reducing sugar to said glucose is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~80~~15. The chocolate product according to any one of claims ~~64~~11 to ~~79~~14, wherein said non-reducing sugar is sucrose.
- ~~81.— The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 80, wherein the ratio of sucrose to said one or more reducing sugars is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~82.— The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 81, wherein the ratio of sucrose to said one or more reducing sugars is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~83.— The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 82, wherein the ratio of sucrose to said one or more reducing sugars is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~84.— The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 83, wherein said one or more reducing sugars include one or more monosaccharides.~~

- ~~85.—The chocolate product according to claim 84, wherein the ratio of sucrose to said one or more monosaccharides is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~86.—The chocolate product according to claim 84 or 85, wherein the ratio of sucrose to said one or more monosaccharides is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~87.—The chocolate product according to any one of claims 84 to 86, wherein the ratio of sucrose to said one or more monosaccharides is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~88.—The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 87, wherein said one or more reducing sugars include glucose.~~
- ~~89.—The chocolate product according to claim 88, wherein the ratio of sucrose to glucose is between 95:5 and 50:50, preferably between 90:10 and 60:40, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~90.—The chocolate product according to claim 88 or 89, wherein the ratio of sucrose to glucose is equal to or below 67:33, preferably between 95:5 and 67:33, on a weight basis.~~
- ~~91.—The chocolate product according to any one of claims 88 to 90, wherein the ratio of sucrose to glucose is between 90:10 and 70:30, on a weight basis.~~
9216. The chocolate product according to any one of claims ~~64-11~~ to ~~91-15~~, wherein said chocolate product comprises less than 80 wt.% of cocoa components, preferably between 5 and 80 wt.% of cocoa components with respect to the weight of the chocolate product, or:
- ~~93.—The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 92, wherein said chocolate product comprises between 5 and 60 wt.%, preferably between 10 and 50 wt.% of cocoa components with respect to the weight of the chocolate product.~~
- ~~94.—The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 93, wherein said chocolate product comprises at least 20 wt.%, preferably at least 30 wt.% of cocoa components with respect to the weight of the chocolate product.~~
- ~~95.—The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 94, wherein said chocolate product comprises at least 35 wt.%, preferably at least 38 wt.% of cocoa components with respect to the weight of the chocolate product.~~
- ~~96.—The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 95, wherein the chocolate product comprises between 5 and 60 wt.% of cocoa butter with respect to the weight of the chocolate product.~~

- ~~97. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 96, wherein said chocolate product comprises between 5 and 40 wt.% of cocoa butter, preferably between 10 and 35 wt.% of cocoa butter, more preferably between 15 and 30 wt.% of cocoa butter with respect to the weight of the chocolate product.~~
- 98~~17~~. The chocolate product according to any one of claims ~~64-11~~ to ~~97~~~~16~~, wherein said chocolate product comprises between 10 and 70 wt.% of said non-reducing sugar with respect to the weight of the chocolate product, or:
- ~~99. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 98, wherein said chocolate product comprises between 25 and 70 wt.% of said non-reducing sugar, preferably between 35 and 65 wt.%, more preferably between 40 and 60 wt.% of sucrose with respect to the weight of the chocolate product.~~
- ~~100. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 99, wherein said chocolate product comprises between 10 and 70 wt.% of sucrose with respect to the weight of the chocolate product.~~
- ~~101. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 100, wherein said chocolate product comprises between 25 and 70 wt.% of sucrose, preferably between 35 and 65 wt.%, more preferably between 40 and 60 wt.% of sucrose with respect to the weight of the chocolate product.~~
- ~~102. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 101, wherein said chocolate product is in the solid state.~~
- ~~103. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 102, wherein said chocolate product is heat resistant.~~
- ~~104. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 103, wherein said chocolate product comprises a sugar network.~~
- ~~105. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 104, wherein said chocolate product is mouldable.~~
- ~~106. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 105, which does not comprise any hydrocolloid.~~
- ~~107. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 106., which does not comprise any emulsifier. —~~
- ~~108. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 107, which does not comprise any polyol.~~
- ~~109. The chocolate product according to any one of claims 64 to 108, wherein the chocolate product does not comprise any sucrose ester.~~

- ~~110~~18. The chocolate product according to any one of claims ~~64~~11 to ~~109~~17, obtainable by the method according to any one of claims 1 to ~~62~~10.
- ~~111~~19. A food product comprising the chocolate product according to any one of claims ~~64~~11 to ~~110~~18.
- ~~112~~. The food product according to claim 111, which comprises an edible substrate and the chocolate product, wherein the chocolate product is disposed on the edible substrate; and/or wherein the chocolate product enrobes at least part of the edible substrate.
- ~~113~~. The food product according to claim 111 or 112, wherein the food product is a bakery product, a dairy product, or a confectionery product, for instance a candy bar.
- ~~114~~. Use of the chocolate product according to any one of claims ~~64~~ to ~~110~~ for the preparation of a food product, for instance, a moulded product, a bakery product, a dairy product, or a confectionery product, for instance a candy bar.
- ~~115~~. Method for preparing a food product, said method comprising preparing a chocolate product using the method according to any one of claims 1 to ~~62~~, or a chocolate product according to any one of claims ~~63~~ to ~~110~~; and using the chocolate product to prepare the food product.
- ~~116~~. The method according to claim 115, wherein the food product is a moulded chocolate product and wherein the method comprises feeding the chocolate product (for instance the mixture resulting from (b) to a mould, optionally followed by aging the product to obtain a heat resistant chocolate product.
- ~~117~~. The method according to claim 115 or 116, wherein the food product comprises an edible substrate, and wherein the method comprises applying the chocolate product (for instance the mixture resulting from (b) on the edible substrate, optionally followed by aging the chocolate product to obtain a heat resistant chocolate product.
- ~~118~~. The method according to any one of claims 115 to 117, wherein the method comprises incorporating the chocolate product into the food product.
- ~~119~~. The method according to any one of claims 115 to 118, wherein the temperature of said chocolate product is kept between 30 and 40 °C during said moulding, applying, and/or incorporating.
- ~~120~~. The method according to any one of claims 115 to 119, wherein said food product is a moulded product, a bakery product, a dairy product; and/or a confectionery product, for instance a candy bar.
- ~~121~~. A method for preparing and storing or transporting a chocolate product, the process comprising storing the mixture obtained in (a) of the method according to any one of

~~claims 1 to 63 at a temperature between 50 and 90 °C, preferably to a temperature between 60 and 85 °C, more preferably to a temperature between 65 and 80 °C.~~