

SPIRITED WOMEN'S NETWORK

EMPOWER. SUPPORT. CONNECT.



"My therapist told me the way to achieve true inner peace is to finish what I start. So far today, I have finished 2 bags of M&M's and a chocolate cake. I feel better already."

Dave Barry

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www.barnardos.org.au

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Chocolate Cherish – April 2009 Edition

I have to admit I am not a huge chocolate fan (I know sacrilege isn't it), not because of the calories, or the sugar or any other perceived nasty, simply that I am more a savoury kind of girl. But every now and again I indulge and even for someone who can usually give or take the taste, at the times I do partake, I thoroughly and deliciously enjoy it. I am not sure if it is the soft, smooth, velvety texture or the divine, delectable taste, or the warm, comforting, indulgent sensation as you allow the sweetness to spread through you. What ever the reason there is something subtle and magical about the gift of chocolate. And one that really needs to be accepted with graciousness and without a hint of guilt. So this Easter, savour..... One more won't hurt!

Happy Easter Wonderful Women,

Natalie

10 Things To Do With Chocolate

By Paul Symonds

Chocolate has to be one of the most popular things in the world and apart from eating it, there are many more uses. Below we look at several things you can do with chocolate.

1. Body Painting - The art of body painting is becoming more and more popular these days and using chocolate for body painting can be a huge amount of fun. The paint should be real chocolate which is melted.
2. Chocolate massage - is now also becoming popular and you have to give it a go. Normally you bathe in a bath of melted and prepared melted chocolate and you are then asked to lie on the massage table, where you are massaged using traditional massage techniques.
3. Chocolate wrestling - might not be everyone's idea of fun but as an alternative to mud wrestling, chocolate wrestling can be a huge amount of fun. It is surely one of the things you have to or maybe perhaps shouldn't do once in your life.
4. Watch it - because there are some very good movies which have been made to do with chocolate including 'Charlie and the Chocolate factory', 'Chocolate' and 'Like Water for Chocolate'.
5. Give some as a present. Giving chocolate as a gift can be really win hearts, especially on Valentines Day. Easter, Christmas and birthdays will always also be great chocolate giving days. Few people will not appreciate some nice chocolates.
6. Travel to see it. Chocolate travel is something you can certainly do with some great chocolate travel tours possible. Tours such as the York Chocolate Tours or Cadburys World can be a good way to spend a day.
7. Have a party. Why not hold a chocolate party where you can talk, eat and think about chocolate. A party which is based on a common interest can be a lot of fun and what better subject than this.

This Month's Recipe

White & dark chocolate walnut brownies

Preparation Time

10 minutes

Cooking Time

35 minutes

Ingredients (serves 10)

- Melted butter, to grease
- 300g dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 125g butter, chopped
- 160g (2/3 cup) caster sugar
- 2 eggs, lightly whisked
- 150g (1 cup) plain flour
- 200g white chocolate, chopped
- 1 x 100g pkt walnut halves, chopped

Method

1.Preheat oven to 180°C. Brush a square 19cm (base measurement) cake pan with melted butter to lightly grease. Line base and 2 opposite sides with non-stick baking paper, allowing it to overhang. Place dark chocolate and chopped butter in a medium saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes or until chocolate melts and mixture combines (see microwave tip). Stir in sugar and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until well **combined**.

2.Remove from heat and set aside for 5 minutes to cool slightly. Stir in eggs and flour. Add white chocolate and walnuts and stir until combined. Spoon into prepared pan and smooth surface with the back of the spoon.

3.Bake in oven for 25 minutes (a skewer inserted into the centre will come out slightly sticky). Remove from oven and set aside for

8. Listen to it. The group 'Hot Chocolate' are still arguably one of the great bands from the 1970s and their music is still well worth listening to. Songs such as 'Heaven Is In The Back Seat Of My Cadillac' are worth listening to again.

9. Make it. Why not experiment and learn and enjoy making your own chocolate. There are some wonderful things you can make which are delicious including logs, cakes, buns and desserts.

10. Sell it. If you really love chocolate as much as I do then you might want to actually go into business and make money from it. Why not write a book about it or start selling it?!

Paul Symonds writes for the Chocolate site including about Chocolate travel.

Chocolate Is Good For Your Health

By Joanna Thanickal

There is great news for chocolate lovers...Chocolate is good for your health! Now, we are not talking here about a candy bar but about real chocolate, the kind that contains at least 71% of real cocoa. Something to remember when selecting chocolate is that the darker it is, the less sugar it contains and the better it is for you.

We are all aware of the emotional benefits of chocolate. By liberating endorphins in the body, chocolate provides us with feelings of comfort and well being, energy and pleasure. Some surveyed women go as far as saying that they would prefer chocolate to sex! No wonder with such a texture, rich colour and taste, chocolate is not only an aphrodisiac but also a pleasure for the senses. In addition, chocolate also contains serotonin and caffeine which both provide energy and promote good humour.

Pleasure aside, chocolate also holds beneficial health properties. Chocolate's complex chemical composition offers a variety of substances that the body needs to function properly and to prevent disease.

Chocolate enhances cardiovascular health. Like red wine, the phenols contained in dark chocolate help prevent coronary diseases. The British Medical Journal reports that a daily portion of 100 grams of dark chocolate reduces blood pressure and the occurrence of cardiovascular incidents by 21%. These phenols are also rich in antioxidants and they help neutralize free radicals produced by the body or absorbed through cigarette smoke and other sources of pollution. Cocoa butter is already used in creams to heal scars and burns. No wonder pharmaceutical companies are now exploring the possibility of researching with chocolate to develop new medication to counter cancers and osteoporosis. Chocolate does contain fats but these are unsaturated and contribute to reducing bad cholesterol and to increasing good cholesterol.

Chocolate is also an excellent source of magnesium. Should it contain nuts, chocolate can become a great source phosphorus and vegetable iron. One of the many benefits of living in our time is that there is a plethora of organic and fair trade chocolates that are readily available to us in natural health food and grocery stores. The benefits of purchasing these types of chocolates abound but the most obvious are that they do not contain organochlorine pesticides that are usually used to treat traditional cocoa crops and that are harmful not only to the consumer but also to the field worker. Furthermore, purchasing fair trade chocolate ensures that the (healthier) worker can benefit from improved working and living conditions by receiving a fair salary for their work.

Like with everything however, chocolate must be consumed in good measure. Chocolate increases caloric intake and energy level. This can be good, provided these calories are burned. We might even change the saying to "Some chocolate everyday keeps the doctor away!"

3 hours to cool completely.
Cut into squares to serve.

This Month's Poem

Sneaking Chocolate

by Trish Quan

The ecstasy comes
when I slip it
in my mouth
unnoticed, undiscovered,
unwatched.
Sinking, melting, like
a secret lover.
No one knows, not even
my waistline.
Dark, milk, bittersweet,
Belgian, Godiva
swallowed whole
while no one is looking

Words that Melt in Your Mouth

The New Taste of Chocolate: A Guide to Fine Chocolate with Recipes

By Maricel Presilla

Like Water for Chocolate

By Laura Esquivel

Joanna Thanickal is a Health Consultant. Being amazed at the health benefits of dark chocolate she now actively encourages eating healthy chocolate. For more details go to:
<http://www.bestchocolate4health.co.uk>

How To Make Homemade Chocolate

By Ant Coe

The easiest way to make chocolate is to buy cooking chocolate from your local supermarket, melt it down, and pour it into molds. Cooking chocolate usually comes in four different flavours: milk, white, dark, and caramel. You do not, however, have to restrict yourself to these flavours as any store bought chocolate can be melted down and used. Now, we will take a look at the different steps used in making your chocolate.

- Break or chop up the chocolate and put it into a bowl; this makes it easier to melt. Next, place the bowl into a microwave oven and put it on high. Another method is to place the broken up chocolate into a ceramic or glass bowl, which is then placed over a pot of boiling water. The aim is to use the steam to melt the chocolate, so never let the bowl touch the boiling water.
- If the chocolate retains its original shape - thereby slowing down the melting process - one can stir it, with a wooden spoon, halfway through the process. This will keep it from overcooking. Note: different kinds of chocolate melt at different rates. White chocolate melts the fastest, while dark chocolate takes twice as long. Cooking chocolate, on the other hand, is the slowest melting chocolate of all three.
- If the melted chocolate is too thin to use for decorating, add glycerine, as this thickens its consistency.
- Once the chocolate is melted, pour it into a mould and leave it to harden. Generally, moulds can be brought at your local supermarket; for more variety, you might want to go to a catering supply store. Alternatively, you can make your own moulds by using aluminium foil or hygienic non-toxic plastics. If you are on a budget, ice trays can make good mould. You should not, however, use copper as it releases a poisonous residue that can be harmful.
- For variety, one can melt two or three different types of chocolate and pour them into the different sections of the same mould. For example, if you have a mould of the Easter bunny, you could pour white chocolate into the mould of his head, milk chocolate into his body, and dark chocolate into his legs. Mixing different kinds of chocolates into the same mould will give you a unique looking chocolates and a variety of tastes. Another idea is to fill the mould almost to the brim with milk chocolate then, while it is still in liquid form, pour white chocolate in a spiral into the same mould, creating a beautiful whirl effect. The possibilities are endless! Bon appetite!

Ant Coe runs the information website How To Make Chocolate (<http://www.how-to-make-chocolate.com>), which contains recipes for making chocolate, chocolate milk, cookies and other chocolate products.