

THE LIGHTSIDE... BECOMING “EN-LIGHT-ENED”!

CHOOSING HEALTHFUL CHOCOLATE

The best way to get on the good side of chocolate is to purchase products (like bars and ready-made goodies) that use only premium grade chocolate and only whole food ingredients.

Or, make your own delicious snacks, meals, treats and desserts, like those found in the recipes in Part 2 of this book. You can easily learn to partner quality pure cocoa (including melting-chocolate) with whole food ingredients for optimum nutrition and flavours. The healthiest chocolate products and recipes are those that use whole cacao, cacao nibs and cocoa powder combined with the healthiest added ingredients.

For more guidance on the educated purchasing and healthy consumption of cocoa and chocolate see FROM CACAO BEAN TO CHOCOLATE BAR, and THE HEALTHY CHOCOLATE KITCHEN GUIDE (Part 2).

QUALITY and QUANTITY

Whole food chocolate products are loaded with health building nutrients, so appropriate portions are more likely to satiate with fewer calories, potentially giving us control over how much we consume.

WHAT ARE WHOLE FOODS?

Whole foods and whole food ingredients:

- ▶ are as close to their natural state as possible;
- ▶ have not been highly processed or refined (like white flour and white sugar have), or altered in ways that significantly decrease their nutritional value;
- ▶ have not had anything taken away, or added to them (eg. bran and germ removed from grains, or preservatives added) to decrease their quality;
- ▶ are nutritionally dense and health enhancing
- ▶ include whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds.

There is clear evidence that a simple, whole food, plant based, balanced diet can prevent and sometimes even reverse heart disease and diabetes. It's exciting to see the healing power of food, along with other healthy habits, reverse type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and triglycerides, high blood pressure, and obesity using this whole foods diet, often within only a matter of months.

A WORD ABOUT FIBRE...

Animal foods (including eggs and dairy) are devoid of fibre, and plant foods contain varying amounts of fibre. In order to get sufficient daily fibre (a minimum of 35-50 grams), one needs to eat, predominately, a variety of plant foods - whole grains, legumes (beans), veggies, fruit, nuts and seeds.

A WORD ABOUT ENZYMES...

Food enzymes are essential to health. Enzymes are considered “the spark of life”, and are catalysts for vitamins and minerals. Enzymes are available in raw fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, and sprouted legumes and grains. Enzymes are destroyed when heated past 118°F. Include a high percentage of raw foods in your diet for optimum nutrition.

QUALITY SWEETENERS

Whole cacao beans and pure cocoa powder are bitter, so the sweetness of chocolate depends on what amount and form of sweetener is added to the cocoa (see Table 1) and THE HEALTHY CHOCOLATE KITCHEN GUIDE (Part 2).

For sufficient energy, most active people require between 55 and 65% of their daily calories from carbohydrate. All carbohydrates (simple or complex), whether from refined sugars or whole food sources, are broken down by digestion into simple sugars that become blood glucose and either act as energy or are stored as fat. However, not all sugars are created equally. So why are we wise to choose “natural sugars” over refined and processed ones? One difference is the micro-nutrient values. Typically, the more processed a food is, the more micro-nutrients and phytochemicals are destroyed, so fewer vitamins and minerals are available, whereas nutrient dense foods naturally retain vitamins and minerals, and possibly fibre and food enzymes.

In these recipes, fruits, nut-meats and seeds provide natural sweetness (in the form of simple and complex carbohydrates), and most provide a good source of dietary fibre. If they are in their raw state, they also have enzymatic benefits needed for many cellular and digestive functions. While some natural sweeteners (eg. honey, maple syrup, agave nectar, brown rice syrup) are not high in fibre, they provide other health building nutrients. If you are diabetic or struggle with blood sugar swings, choose recipes that contain fruits, nuts or seeds over those with fibreless sugars, as both the fibre and the fat help to slow the metabolism of the carbohydrates into the bloodstream. Nuts and seeds are rich in complex carbohydrates that help to keep blood sugar balanced and energy steady.

TABLE 1: NUTRITIONAL PROFILE FOR COMPARISON (100 grams)

	Maple Syrup	Honey	Blackstrap Molasses	Dates	Refined Sugar
Calories	261	304	235	282	387
Fat	0.2 g			0.39 g	
Sodium	9 mg	4 mg	55 mg	2 mg	2 mg
Potassium	204 mg	52 mg	2492 mg	656 mg	99.98 g
Carbohydrates	67.09 g	82.4 g	60.8 g	75.03 g	
Dietary Fibre		0.2 g		8 g	
Protein		0.3 g		2.45 g	
Vitamin A				10 IU	
Vitamin C		0.5 mg		0.4 mg	
Calcium	67 mg	6 mg	860 mg	39 mg	1 mg
Iron	1.2 mg	0.42 mg	17.5 mg	1.02 mg	
Thiamine			0.03 mg	0.05 mg	
Riboflavin		0.04 mg	0.05 mg	0.07 mg	0.02mg
Niacin	0.03 mg	0.12 mg	1.08 mg	1.27 mg	
Vitamin B6		0.02 mg	0.7 mg	0.17 mg	
Folate		2 µg	1 µg	19 µg	
Pantothenic Acid	0.04 mg	0.07 mg	0.88 mg	0.59 mg	
Phosphorus	2 mg	4 mg	40 mg	62 mg	
Magnesium	14 mg	2 mg	215 mg	43 mg	
Zinc	4.16 mg	0.22 mg	1 mg	0.29 mg	
Copper	0.07 mg	0.04 mg	2.04 mg	0.21 mg	
Manganese	3.30 mg	0.08 mg	2.61 mg	0.26 mg	
Selenium	0.6 µg	0.8 µg	17.8 µg	3 µg	0.6 µg
Water	32.11 mg	17.1 mg	28.70 mg	20.53 mg	0.03 mg

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