

Chocolate

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Nothing beats a good piece of chocolate. It's rich, smooth, creamy and makes us feel good. It's still hard to think of chocolate as a healthy food. Part of the allure is the guilty pleasure of eating it. But before we raid the candy store, it's worth remembering that chocolate is not a low calorie food. Chocolate is a food made from roasted ground cacao beans.

Cacao is actually a Mayan word meaning "God Food" and modern Latin name "Theobroma Cacao" meaning "Food of the Gods". The tasty secret of the cacao (kah KOW) tree was discovered 2,000 years ago in the tropical rainforests of the Americas. The pods of this tree contain seeds that can be processed into chocolate. Later, the Spanish conquistadors brought the seeds back home to Spain, where new recipes were created. New technologies and innovations have changed the texture and taste of chocolate, but it still remains one of the world's favorite flavors [1].

The seed pods of the cacao tree grow not on its branches but directly on the trunk. Each pod is about the size of a pineapple and holds thirty to fifty seeds - enough to make about seven milk chocolate or two dark chocolate bars. Cacao trees today are endangered by natural threats, such as the witch's broom fungus and other diseases and pests. Cacao seeds are not sweet. They contain the chemicals caffeine which gives them a bitter taste. Africa is now the source of more than half the world's cacao, while Mexico today provides only 1.5 percent [2].

There is no getting around the fact that chocolate is a high fat food. But there is growing evidence that, in small quantities, some kinds of chocolate may actually be good for you. Dark chocolate is naturally rich in flavonoids. While you may have heard that chocolate is "bad for you", that it is unhealthy, but

When healthy and high-quality natural ingredients are used, it is possible to make a truly "healthy chocolate" from organically-grown, unprocessed, unroasted, raw cocoa/cacao beans that has no pesticide. Next to organic raw cocoa/cacao beans or cocoa powder, unsweetened and dairy-free dark chocolate is the healthiest chocolate; while the least healthy chocolate is milk chocolate which includes dairy products and milk fats or lard. Remember, so-called "white chocolate" is not really a "chocolate" - and certainly not a "healthy chocolate". It is "white" because it does not contain any of the dark brown cocoa powder found in dark chocolate and milk chocolate. It is not made from the cocoa bean, but from the fatty cocoa butter extracted from the "fruit" part of the cacao plant. The problems so often associated with chocolate are not caused by the real cocoa in the chocolate, but by substances added to it-sugar, dairy products, milk, bad fats. You may be surprised to learn that cocoa is a fruit and it is one of the most healthy fruits commonly eaten by man [3].

We can tell a lot about this wonderful global sweetness. But really we can't live without chocolate. It raises our mood and makes us more kindly.

Bibliography:

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