

CHOCOLATE

Happy Halloween! This month we not only celebrate Halloween, but also National Chocolate Day! Despite what you may think, they surprisingly do not fall on the same day. Celebrate with us on the 28th while we enjoy chocolate cake. You are also more than welcome to celebrate with me again on November 1st, when all of the Halloween candy goes on sale.

What IS Chocolate?

Chocolate is derived from the fruit pods of the cacao tree. The pods are dried and the cocoa beans are removed from the pods, then fermented, dried, roasted, and cracked. This helps separate the beans from the shell to form what we call a “nib”. Nibs are ground to extract some of the cocoa butter, or natural fat found in the cacao bean. What’s left is a thick, dark brown paste called “chocolate liquor” and it is made up of cocoa solids and cocoa butter.

Different combinations of “chocolate liquor”, cocoa solids, milk, sugar, and cocoa butter make different varieties of chocolate like milk, white, or dark chocolates.

Health Benefits

Studies have found numerous health benefits in chocolate consumption. A 2015 study published by the journal *Heart* found that habitual chocolate consumers have lower risk of coronary heart disease and stroke compared with those who did not eat chocolate. Other studies have linked chocolate to decreased age-related cognitive dysfunction, and linked the flavanols in dark chocolate to improved insulin sensitivity and blood flow and lowered blood pressure.

Recommendations

Although chocolate, especially dark chocolate, contains a lot of nutrients, it’s also high in calories and sometimes saturated fat. To maintain nutrient balance, try not to consume more than 1oz per day.



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!
MARY D



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