

# Americans consume 2 billion pounds of chocolate annually



This is for all the chocolate lovers. Chocolate is one of the world's most far-reaching passions.

The chocolate epidemic causes the typical American to consume approximately 12 pounds per year, putting the U.S. total consumption of chocolate at two billion pounds annually.

Not only does chocolate fuel an addiction-like desire, people talk about it endlessly and even dream about it.

Neuropharmacologists have found in studies marijuana-like properties in chocolate along with two related chemicals that have been linked to treating many ailments, including depression. And, dark chocolate contains two to three times as much of these substances per ounce as milk chocolate. Eating high-fat, chocolate foods can trigger the brain's production of natural opiates.

Adam Drewnowski, director of the University of Michigan's Human Nutrition Program, discovered that when binge eaters used a drug that blocked the brain's opiate receptors, their cravings for sweet, fatty-foods diminished.

On the down side, chocolate can cause migraines, acne, obesity, dental cavities, and heartburn. Two chemicals in chocolate, theobromine and caffeine, are implicated in fibrocystic breast disease.

On the up side, stearic acid, one of the fatty acids in chocolate, can actually lower cholesterol. Chocolate also contains powerful antioxidants, similar to those found in fruits and vegetables. Chocolate also contains magnesium. It is thought that if you crave chocolate, your diet may be deficient in magnesium!

■ **Actually, one of the reasons people become hooked on chocolate is because it contains phenylethylamine, a chemical produced naturally by the brain, which makes you feel good.**

Chocolate contains a small amount of caffeine — about 16 milligrams per ounce, as compared with 137 milligrams found in a cup of coffee — but it doesn't take a lot of caffeine to cause an addiction.

Actually, one of the reasons people become hooked on chocolate is because it contains phenylethylamine, a chemical produced naturally by the brain, which makes you feel good. Your body in large amounts also produces phenylethylamine when you fall in love or have a "mad" crush on someone cute at the office. Well, guess what? Chocolate can help you reproduce that feeling so you don't have to do anything too irrational.

True chocolate lovers know that when they deeply crave chocolate, the inexpensive, low-quality stuff just won't do the trick. These connoisseurs want the finest in chocolate.

Lisa Smith of Farmington Hills feels that her need for chocolate is physical. "I can eat 160 other things, and nothing will satisfy me until I eat my chocolate." What is Lisa's favorite kind of chocolate? Suchard Rocher, a chocolate that she purchased last summer while visiting Paris.

Judy McGuire, owner of Sydney Bogg, divulged that Valentine's Day is her single busiest day of the year, with Turtles as her best-selling year-round item. "Chocolate is everyone's 'feel good' food," she says. And Sydney Bogg chocolate tastes so good because only the purest ingredients are used in the making. Pure ingredients make it taste finer.

Look for a true chocolate addict's tricks to satisfying your chocolate addiction can include chocolate syrup, which has 36 calories

and 0.2 grams of fat per tablespoon as compared with chocolate fudge at 73 calories and 2.8 g fat per tablespoon.

Try a chocolate phosphate (or soda) at your favorite deli or if you are a real adventurous, White Wave has Chocolate Silk, which is a chocolate soy milk. Prepare treats such as chocolate brownies and cookies with cocoa powder (10 calories and 0.6 grams of fat per tablespoon of powder) and Wonderlaim Fat and Egg Substitute. (Wonderlaim is actually pureed plums and prunes, which is a healthy, fat-free alternative to butter or shortening.)

Enjoy mocha at Caribou (90 calories and 1.6 grams of fat per shot) or at Starbucks (70 calories and 2 grams of fat per shot). Both of these popular coffeehouses even have soy milk to boot. For those of you who like that creamy comfort feeling, try chocolate pudding made with Mori no tofu and Mori no Mates. You'll never believe you are eating tofu once this mixture is combined, and the fiber keeps you full for quite awhile.

There is nothing wrong with enjoying a small amount of chocolate occasionally. Just save it for when you really want it — like on Valentine's Day!

*Beverly Price is a registered dietitian and exercise physiologist. She operates Living Better Sensibly, a private nutrition practice in Farmington Hills that offers programs for individuals and corporations. She is the co-author of "Nutrition Secrets for Optimal Health," Tall Tree Publishing Company. Visit her website at [www.nutritionsecrets.com](http://www.nutritionsecrets.com).*

Coming from her column on the first Sunday of each month in Taste.

Here are some lowfat chocolate recipes:

## CINNAMAT CHILI

- 1 quart water
- 1 pounds ground meat substitute, such as Morningstar Farms Harvest Burger, broken into smaller pieces
- 2 medium onions, finely grated
- 2 cans (8 ounces each) tomato sauce
- 5 whole allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 4 tablespoon chili powder
- 1/2 ounce unsweetened chocolate
- 4 cloves garlic
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 large bay leaf
- 5 whole cloves
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Add meat substitute to 4-quart pot containing one quart of water, stir. Boil slowly for 30 minutes. Add onion, tomato sauce, allspice, red pepper, cumin, chili powder, chocolate, garlic, vinegar, bay leaf, cloves, Worcestershire sauce, salt and cinnamon. Stir to blend, bringing to a boil; reduce heat simmer uncovered for about three hours.

During last hour, the pot may be covered after

desired consistency is reached. Makes 8 servings.

## CREPES WITH HOT FUDGE SAUCE

- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup soy milk or orange juice
- 5 eggs or equivalent egg substitute
- Non-stick cooking spray

In blender or food processor, combine all ingredients until smooth. Let rest for at least 15 minutes up to overnight. Coat a small non-stick coated skillet with non-stick cooking spray and heat over medium heat. Spoon batter into skillet. If the dough is too thick, add more liquid. If it is too thin, add more flour. Cook until the top is not shiny. Serve folded over with jam or fresh fruit and hot fudge sauce.

## HOT FUDGE SAUCE

- 5 tablespoon warm water
- 3 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 4 tablespoons brown rice syrup
- 1 tablespoon arrowroot powder mixed with 2 tablespoons water

Combine water, cocoa and syrup in a small saucepan over medium heat until dissolved. Remove and add rest of ingredients.

Whisk until smooth.



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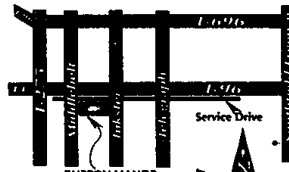
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