

## CHOCOLATE COOKING DEMONSTRATION

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Is chocolate or cacao good for me and how can I include it in a way it will benefit my health? The short answer is YES, especially if it's minimally processed without added sugars and fats.

### What Nutrients does cacao powder contain?

- **Flavanoids** – these are antioxidants found in fruit, vegetables, tea, wine, and coffee) that may prevent heart disease and reduce risk factors for diabetes.
- **Magnesium** – mineral that helps build bones, helps digest macronutrients, is needed for neurotransmitters like serotonin, and enables proper nerve functioning
- **Iron** – breaks down proteins, supports healthy blood vessels and cells to deliver oxygen throughout the body, prevents fatigue, necessary to maintain strong hair, skin, and nails
- **Calcium** – supports strong bones, and proper heart muscle and nerve functioning
- **Fiber** – We need this nutrient to help move our food along in the digestive tract and it promotes a healthy heart. 1 Tbsp has almost 2g Fiber!
- **Vitamin K** – This is a key nutrient to help our blood clot and helps for healthy bones.
- **Choline** – supports healthy liver, brain and nerve function, healthy metabolism and adequate energy levels.
- **Selenium** – Good for thyroid health, support antioxidant function to clear free radicals, supports healthy immune system, maintains good metabolism and reduces inflammation

### What are the Health Benefits of 100% Cacao?

- **Heart Health.** The polyphenolic *flavonoids* may prevent heart disease and has been shown to:
  - **Reduce Blood Pressure** and support healthy blood vessels
  - **Reduce LDL** (“bad cholesterol”) and **increase HDL** (“good cholesterol” that helps clear out toxic substances)
- **Insulin Sensitivity:** Cocoa and its nutrients may help to reduce resistance and promote insulin sensitivity (the hormone which regulates blood sugar), and in turn may reduce risk of type two diabetes
- **Makes you Happy =)** By producing increased production of mood boosting chemicals like endorphins and neurotransmitters
- **Brain and Nerve Health:** Research shows 1 oz. of chocolate may support decreased risk for age-related cognitive decline. The nutrients reduce inflammation, and also clear harmful free radicals due to their antioxidant capacity.

### Tips for Reaping the Benefits

Anything in excess can cause major trouble in our bodies, so make sure you are sticking to these tips:

- **Choose >70% Dark Chocolate.** The darker it is, the higher percentage of the “raw cacao” which means more nutrients, less processing, and likely less sugar and fat.
- **Choose Dark over Milk or White Chocolate.** White or Milk chocolate has likely been more processed and does not contain those bitter compounds, flavonoids, and nutrients. Most “chocolate” is sold as “milk chocolate” or sold in processed forms which are high in sugar and fat, and do not contain the same bitter, polyphenolic compounds.
- **Use Cacao Powder:** This doesn't have natural sweetness, but you can use different recipes to make it a sweet treat, smoothie, or yogurt parfait, or breakfast with the additional of other ingredients.
- **Make the Chocolate Swap.** If you have chocolate in your house, look at the ingredient label to see if its dark chocolate and if it has any additional sugars or oils added. If so, swap it out for the ideas above.

*Nutrition Facts for 1 Tbsp 100% Cocoa: 10 cal, 0.5 g fat, 2 g fiber, 3 g carb, 1 g protein*

### Ways to Incorporate 1 oz. of Dark Chocolate

- **1 oz. Dark Chocolate after dinner** (remember, at least 75% dark and no more than 1 oz.!)
- **Cacao Smoothie:** Banana, Almond Milk, 1 Date, 2 Tbsp Raw Cacao, 1/8 tsp sea salt (option to add 1 Tbsp peanut butter)
- **Raw Chocolate Pudding** *\*recipe below*
- **Raw Chocolate Brownies:** *\*Recipe below ...\*Note Betty Crocker brownies doesn't count =)*
- **Trail Mix:** Dark chocolate pieces, raisins, peanuts, raw almonds and cashews
- **Dessert Oats:** 1/2 cup oats, ¼ cup skim/almond milk, 1 Tbsp cacao nibs or 100% cacao powder, drizzle of honey/agave, 1 Tbsp raisins)
- **Yogurt & Berries:** Add cacao nibs to plain yogurt with fresh raspberries

## RECIPES

### **CREAMY CHOCOLATE PUDDING**

1 Avocado, ripe  
2 Tbsp 100% Cacao powder, unsweetned  
2 Tbsp Honey or Agave  
2-6 Tbsp Almond Milk  
sprinkle of sea salt

\*Optional Nuts, raisins, pistachios, goji berries, strawberries for topping

Use a blender to process all ingredients until smooth.

<http://theprettybee.com/2014/01/chocolate-avocado-pudding-paleo-vegan.html>

### **RAW CHOCOLATE BROWNIES**

- 3 cup Nuts (almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, pecans or a mix of various nuts)
- 2.5 cup dates
- 1 cup 100% cacao powder
- sea salt to taste

1. Use a high-powered blender or food processor. First chop nuts/process until finely ground. 2. Add raw cacao and sea salt and continue to pulse a few times. 3. Add dates (one at a time) while food processor is running. A clump will start to form. 4. Remove from the processor and roll out in a baking pan or roll into mini balls. If you've rolled them out into a baking pan, put in the freezer and 4 hours later use a sharp knife or pizza cutter to slice into bars. Eat as is or freeze for later consumption.

### **VALENTINES DAY PARFAIT**

- Angel Food Cake (on bottom)
- Vanilla Yogurt
- Strawberries
- Chocolate Chips/Cacao Nibs sprinkled on top

Layer the above ingredients in the order as it reads, and place in a small mug for a one serving, or layer in a clear jar or trifle bowl for an elegant (and healthier) dessert.

### **Resources:**

<http://www.mynewroots.org/site/>