

HEALTHY PLEASURE



# *Healthy* **CHOCOLATE RECIPES**

# Welcome, fellow chocolate lover!

My whole life, I've been a chocolate lover. As a child, I even was a chocolate addict, using it to calm down the hunger for attention and quality time with my family. Hence, eating chocolate usually was linked to some guilt or negative feelings.



When I became vegan 20 years ago and learned more about plant-based healthy foods, it seemed that chocolate had to be completely banned, at least anything besides dark chocolate. With time I found more or less healthy recipes for chocolate cakes and cookies.

One of the biggest benefits of going 100% raw vegan for some months was learning more about healthy chocolate.

More than for me personally, it made me happy for my clients who I was helping overcome chronic pain or chronic diseases with a plant-based diet.

I hope you will enjoy the recipes and if you are not on a plant-based diet yet, may these recipes show you that we truly don't miss anything with this lifestyle.

*Gaia*

# What makes the difference?

Usually, chocolate is considered to be unhealthy and it makes you fat. Let me give you a short overview of why this is true.

The two main culprits are sugar and milk. Both are toxic, cancer-promoting substances that are always undermining your health. And industrial cacao that has been roasted in the process of making chocolate, is devoid of nearly all its positive traits.

Industrial sugar is a threat to your health. Not only because it havoc your insulin, but also because it blocks calcium absorption from food and depletes your body of minerals. Sugar is eight times more addictive than cocaine and modifies your brain and your behavior. Consuming sugar creates an acidic environment in your cells and less oxygen circulating in the body which promotes an ideal environment for cancer cell growth.

We all have cancer cells in our body, more or less at any given moment, but normally, the immune system detects and destroys them. Milk, or better said any form of dairy, is detrimental to human health in so many forms but when you look closely, it all comes down to two major things: 1. It contains a lot of animal protein and 2. it's hormones make your body produce certain enzymes that provide a "cloak of invisibility" to cancer cells so that your immune system cannot detect and destroy them as it normally would do.

The non-organic cacao production uses a lot of pesticides, some of them having even been banned in the EU\*. They are harmful to humans and pollinators like bees (f.ex. Neonicotinoids), and while some of them have approved safe levels, there is a lot of unregulated use in the cocoa production, and the effects on human health through the combination of these pesticides have never been studied.

Now let's turn to the healthy side of things...

\* <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214750022002335>

# Healthy Chocolate Ingredients

## Raw cacao

Raw cacao has not been exposed to temperatures higher than 42°C, that's about 108 °F. This is so important because all enzymes die if exposed to higher temperatures.

It's not roasted but fermented, something your good gut bacteria love.

Raw cacao contains hundreds of healthy enzymes together with vitamins B1, B2, B3, B5, B9 (Folate) and E plus the minerals magnesium, calcium, sulfur, zinc, iron, copper, potassium and manganese. The high concentration of magnesium found in raw chocolate helps with relaxation. Besides that raw cacao

- has 40 times the antioxidants of blueberries
- is the highest plant-based source of iron
- contains tryptophan which is converted into serotonin, one of your happiness hormones

This makes it a powerful booster for your health.

Raw organic cacao is more expensive and it only makes sense to use it when you are not going to heat it. If you want to bake cookies or cakes, use “normal” but organic cacao to avoid pesticides at least.



Important note: Try to always get organic products from trustworthy sources with high hygiene standards so that you get products without pesticides, aflatoxins, etc.



# Sweeteners

I already wrote above about industrial sugar and the health detriments it promotes. Maple or agave syrup are only slightly better because they, too, are not whole foods and can cause problems with your blood sugar, although not as much as sugar.

Stevia in its natural form of fresh or powdered green leaves is ok, too, but it has a strong taste of liquorish. That's why I personally don't use it at all. The liquid drops and white powder stevia products are artificial sweeteners, not natural whole products and you should avoid them. Just like any other artificial sweeteners they trick the brain into expecting sugar because of the taste. The body starts to prepare for processing the sugar and then nothing arrives. This can lead to high insulin levels. Insulin is not only regulating our blood sugar, it's a growth hormone and when it circulates freely without sugar to put into the cells, it can promote cancer growth.

My absolute favorite sweeteners are dates. They are whole foods, and besides sweetening, they provide calcium, fiber, iron and potassium.

The best way of using them is either blend them directly with whatever you are preparing or soak them in water and then blend them to your desired consistency.

The big fresh Medjool dates usually don't require soaking.



# Healthy Fats

While we shouldn't exaggerate with fats, it's important to know that not all fats are equal. The following are best to use in chocolate recipes

## Cacao Butter

It provides anti-oxidants, particularly polyphenols and flavonoids, along with small amounts of vitamins and minerals like vitamin E, vitamin K, and magnesium. Over 30% of this fat are healthy unsaturated fats which makes it a bit healthier than coconut oil with it's 90% saturated fats.

## Avocados

They are great health foods because they contain a lot of omega-3 fatty acids that we need, along with fiber, iron and potassium.

Even though they are high in fat you don't have to worry because when you eat whole foods that contain a lot of fiber the fats are processed differently from when you use oil.

## Nut and Seed Butters

If you are using nut butters from raw nuts without any additions (like oil), then you can add them to your recipes without hesitation. Unlike other fats, nuts and small amounts of nut butters, can even promote weight loss.





## A wooden recipe box with the word "Recipes" written in a gold, cursive font. The box has ornate metal clasps. In front of the box, on a blue and white patterned surface, lies a small, light-colored card. The card features the word "Directions" written twice in a black, cursive font, with a black silhouette of a knife placed between the two words. Below the second "Directions" is a small, faint illustration of a person. The card also has some faint, illegible text and a small, faint illustration of a person.

**Directions**

Easy Medium Difficult

Mound and Bake

30-40 minutes

10-15 minutes

15-20 minutes



# Basic Chocolate Bars

## Ingredients

- 3/4 cup cacao butter, melted (170g)
- 1/2 cup (about 10-12) pitted dates, soaked in warm water for 10 minutes
- 2/3 cup cacao powder (60g)
- 1/4 tsp vanilla bean powder (optional)
- 1/4 tsp salt, finely ground (optional)



## Directions

- Melt the cacao butter at around 40-45°C (104-113°F) using a double boiler or dehydrator.
- Grind the salt to a fine powder.
- Add agave nectar to the melted cacao butter.
- Sieve cacao powder, vanilla powder, and salt into the butter and agave mixture.
- Whisk until smooth.
- Keep stirring and whisking until the chocolate reaches around 31°C (88°F).
- Pour into molds.
- Refrigerate until set.
- Store in the fridge or at room temperature.

# Creative Variations

Here are some creative ways to flavor your raw vegan chocolate:

1. Add natural extracts: Try flavoring your chocolate with extracts like peppermint, orange, almond, or vanilla for classic combinations.
2. Incorporate spices: Experiment with spices like cinnamon, cardamom, chili powder, or ginger to give your chocolate a unique kick.
3. Use dried fruits: Mix in finely chopped dried fruits like goji berries, cranberries, or candied orange peel for bursts of fruity flavor.
4. Add nuts or seeds: Stir in chopped nuts like almonds, hazelnuts, or pistachios, or seeds like hemp or pumpkin seeds for crunch and nuttiness.
5. Swirl in nut butters: Create a marbled effect by swirling in almond butter, cashew butter, or tahini.
6. Create a salt contrast: Sprinkle flaky sea salt on top or mix in for a sweet-salty combination.

Start with small amounts of any additional flavoring and adjust to taste. This allows you to create your own unique raw vegan chocolate creations while maintaining the integrity of the chocolate base.





# Ice Cream

## Ingredients

- 3 frozen bananas, sliced
- 1 ripe avocado, pitted and peeled
- 1/2 cup raw cacao powder
- 1/4 cup (about 5-6) pitted dates, soaked in warm water for 10 minutes
- 1/4 cup coconut cream (optional for extra creaminess)
- Pinch of salt (optional)



## Directions

- Prepare the Bananas: Ensure the bananas are sliced and frozen for at least 2 hours.
- Blend Ingredients: In a high-speed blender or food processor, combine the frozen banana slices, avocado flesh, raw cacao powder, drained dates, coconut cream (if using), and a pinch of salt (if using).
- Blend Until Smooth: Blend all the ingredients until smooth and creamy, stopping to scrape down the sides as needed. If the mixture is too thick, you can add a small amount of plant-based milk to help blend.
- Serve or Freeze: If you want a firmer consistency, freeze it for 1-2 hours and allow it to sit at room temperature for a few minutes before scooping.

# Mousse au Chocolat

## Ingredients

- 2 avocados
- 80g (about 6-7) pitted dates
- 1/2 cup or 50g raw cacao powder
- vanilla (optional)



## Directions

- Blend the ingredients until smooth and creamy.
- Fill the chocolate mousse into small serving glasses. Chill in the refrigerator for at least thirty minutes.
- Garnish with mint leaves, sesame seeds,
- or fresh/thawed berries.

