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Anyone For Chocolate?

Chocolate. Healthy. What?! Yes please.

Incase you need more convincing, let me tell you about these health benefits. Proper dark chocolate has plenty of health benefits - it's rich in gut-bacteria feeding fibre plus loads of nutrients including magnesium, potassium, iron, zinc and selenium. Plus, dark chocolate is the highest ranking antioxidant food known to man! There is also plenty of research about real chocolate improving blood flow and blood pressure, reducing risk of heart disease. Sounds like a winner to me. Not that I've ever needed an excuse to eat chocolate!



The trouble is that mainstream chocolate has too much sugar and too little cocoa, negating the health benefits and making us fat and unhealthy. The issue with real dark chocolate is that it can turn your face inside out when you eat it! This said, I must admit to having developed a taste for the dark stuff lately, you do get used to its bitterness!

Now. Here is a simple recipe for homemade chocolate, and some ideas to make it more fun. It is still high in fat and calories, so a portion a day is plenty. This said, proper chocolate scratches the chocolate itch very nicely, so it's easier to stop yourself inhaling the whole lot at once!

This recipe makes 10 portions, and you can pick up the cacao butter, cacao powder and xylitol in the health food shop.

50g Cacao Butter

Xylitol, to taste - since I developed a taste for dark chocolate, I've actually stopped putting this in, but I'd use two fairly generous teaspoons to make chocolate for my little girl - hopefully that gives you some guidance

60g Cacao Powder

All you do is melt the cacao butter and xylitol over a low heat, and stir until the xylitol has dissolved.

Add the cacao powder and give it a good mix. This is the basic chocolate mix and you can now either:

Pour it into a silicone ice cube mould and pop it in the freezer for half an hour to set, then pop out and keep in a pot in the fridge.

Or

Pour it onto a sheet of grease proof paper on a baking sheet, spread it out thinly, then freeze for half an hour before breaking into trendy chocolate bark and keeping in a pot in the fridge.

Or, you can make things more interesting:

Add a few drops of peppermint or orange essence (you need less than you think!)

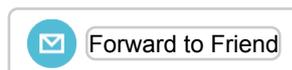
Add a couple of spoonfuls of coconut oil

Make it into little truffles by adding a spoonful of cream to the mix before setting in your silicone mould. These won't set hard.

Add some toasted desiccated coconut, cacao nibs, crushed nuts or toasted seeds to the mix, or on top of the chocolate when you've spread it onto the grease proof paper

Until next time, enjoy staying healthy!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Heather". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a red flourish that extends to the left and then curves back towards the right.

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