**USER GUIDE**

**What is chocolate? Where does it come from?**

Chocolate is a food made from the seeds of a tropical tree called

the cacao. These trees flourish in warm, moist climates. Most of the

world's cacao beans come from West Africa, where Ghana, the Ivory Coast

and Nigeria are the largest producers. Because of a spelling error,

probably by English traders long ago, these beans became known as cocoa

beans.

**What kinds of chocolate are there?**

Depending on what is added to (or removed from) the chocolate liquor,

different flavors and varieties of chocolate are produced. Each has a

different chemical make-up, the differences are not solely in the taste.

Be sure, therefore, to use the kind the recipe calls for, as different

varieties will react differently to heat and moisture.

\* Unsweetened or Baking chocolate is simply cooled, hardened

chocolate liquor. It is used primarily as an ingredient in recipes, or

as a garnish.

\*Semi-sweet chocolate is also used primarily in recipes. It has

extra cocoa butter and sugar added. Sweet cooking chocolate is basically

the same, with more sugar for taste.

\* Milk chocolate is chocolate liquor with extra cocoa butter,

sugar, milk and vanilla added. This is the most popular form for chocolate.

It is primarily an eating chocolate.

\* Cocoa is chocolate liquor with much of the cocoa butter removed,

creating a fine powder. It can pick up moisture and odors from other

products, so you should keep cocoa in a cool, dry place, tightly covered.

There are several kinds of cocoa:

~ Low-fat cocoa has the most fat removed. It typically has

less than ten percent cocoa butter remaining.

~ Medium-fat cocoa has anywhere from ten to twenty-two percent

cocoa butter in it.

~ Drinking or Breakfast cocoa has over twenty-two percent

left in it. This is the cocoa used in chocolate milk powders like Nestle's

Quik.

~ Dutch process cocoa is cocoa which has been specially

processed to neutralize the natural acids in the chocolate. It is slightly

darker and has a much different taste than regular cocoa.

\* White chocolate is somewhat of a misnomer. In the United States,

in order to be legally called 'chocolate' a product must contain cocoa

solids. White chocolate does not contain these solids, which leaves it a

smooth ivory or beige color. Real white chocolate is primarily cocoa butter,

sugar, milk and vanilla. There are some products on the market that call

themselves white chocolate, but are made with vegetable oils instead of

cocoa butter. Check the label to avoid these cheap imitations. White

chocolate is the most fragile form of chocolate; pay close attention to

it while heating or melting it.

\* Decorator's chocolate or confectioner's chocolate isn't really

chocolate at all, but a sort of chocolate flavored candy used for things

such as covering strawberries. It was created to melt easily and harden

quickly, but it isn't chocolate. If you want quick and easy, use

decorator's chocolate. If you want the real thing, use real chocolate

and patience.

**How can I tell the quality of the chocolate I have?**

Follow this 4 steps to ensure the quality of the chocolate.

* How quickly does it melt in your mouth? The quicker the better.

(good chocolate have cocoa butter which melts at a much lower temperature

than oil which is a substitute used in cheap chocolate.)

* How smooth does the chocolate feel as it melts? The smoother the better.

(Good chocolate goes through a longer conching)

* How intense is the flavor?

The more intense and the more levels of flavors you can taste, the better the quality!

(Poor quality chocolate usually will be covered up with more sugar and vanilla to make up for the intensity of taste.)

* Breathe! Inhale and exhale. Good chocolate will leave after tastes in your mouth and tongue

**What is this white, blotchy stuff on my chocolate bar?**

A white, filmy residue on chocolate is called a bloom. It occurs

when some of the cocoa butter in the chocolate separates from the cocoa

solids, usually when the chocolate is stored in a warm area. If you buy

a chocolate bar and find it has bloomed, don't let the sales person convince you the taste has not been altered.

**I just bought a whole bunch of chocolate. How should I store it?**

Chocolate is best kept at around 68-72 degrees Fahrenheit, the

temperature of a nice pantry or dark cabinet. Kept at this temperature,

chocolate (assuming it isn't covering fruit or other perishables) has a

shelf life of about a year. Freezing chocolate isn't such a great idea;

when you freeze it, then thaw it out, it will have a greater tendency to

bloom. but if you must, let it warm gradually to room temperature before

you try cooking with it.

**What is lecithin and why is it in my chocolate?**

Lecithin is an emulsifier used to reduce the viscosity, or thickness

of chocolate. Thinning out the chocolate slightly reduces the amount of

cocoa butter required to produce the correct texture in the manufacturing

process.

**Cooking with chocolate**

Chocolate is a very tricky food to cook with. Temperatures that are

too high can scorch it, temperatures too low can cause it to harden

unevenly. It must be watched very carefully. But if you can master the

art, you can create some breathtaking desserts.

**What is tempering? How can I temper chocolate at home?**

In order for chocolate to cool into a hard candy and not a mushy goo,

it must be tempered. This is a process where the chocolate is slowly

heated, then slowly cooled, allowing the cocoa butter molecules to solidify

in an orderly fashion. The following is a pretty thorough method for

tempering at home: (credit to Pete Lockhart, pete@teleport.com)

Frankly, I've had decent luck with microwave ovens for melting the

chocolate. It's an iterative process of nuking, stirring, nuking,

stirring, etc. But I like the idea that the chocolate is not getting

steamed as it is with a double boiler. You might try 15 seconds increments

on high for a pound of chocolate. Keep an eye on the time as the chocolate

gets into its melt; you may want to ramp it down some what.

However, for either nuking or using a double boiler, it's not a bad idea

to break up the chocolate into little pieces. For a double boiler be

careful not to have the water boiling or touching the bottom of the upper

vessel. It sounds from your description like you might have the heat

cranked up too much, even given convection from the bottom vessel to the

top. Be patient. Dark chocolate can be taken up to about 115 degrees F

and milk chocolate can be taken up to 110 degrees F.

Once you've gotten a complete melt, letting the chocolate cool slowly while

stirring it or working it will encourage the cocoa butter to arrange itself

in a way that is particularly useful for making candy. This is 'tempering'

the chocolate.

Turns out that cocoa butter molecules can arrange themselves in a variety

of ways [six that I know of] and it is these different arrangements that

determine the melting temperature of the chocolate. The respective

melting temperatures range from about 60 degrees F to about 97 degrees F.

The one you're looking to get is the most stable form, and has a melting

temperature of 93 - 95 degrees F. Which is good, because it means that

your chocolate will tend to be that way, as long as you're patient. It

also means that the chocolate is going to feel delightfully cooling in

your mouth.

So, you've taken your chocolate up to 110 -115 degrees, and that has had

the effect of breaking up [melting] all of the cocoa butter molecules.

Now you want them to arrange themselves in a stable arrangement; but you

also want to manipulate the chocolate now that it is a liquid.

There are a couple of strategies for encouraging the cocoa butter into

its stable arrangement. As mentioned above, stirring it or working it

with a spatula will tend to bring about the proper 'crystallization' of

the cocoa butter molecules. Another technique is to 'seed' the molten

chocolate by putting in little pieces of solid chocolate. The molten

cocoa butter then will do a kind of follow-the-leader and arrange itself

after the fashion of the solids. Which is what you want. The hazard

with seeding your chocolate is that you might get little air pockets

associated with the solid pieces. I tend to just stir the chocolate.

Traditionally, small batch chocolate is tempered on marble slabs. Just

pour it on and work it with a spatula until it becomes kind of

slushy-mushy. I don't use a marble slab, I use a bowl that I can pop

back into the microwave if I need to.

The next tricky step is to maintain enough heat to keep the chocolate

molten, but not heat it up so much that it forgets how to arrange itself.

This is where the 85 - 90 degrees F comes in. [I think the heating pad

idea sounds cool]. The marble slab will retain some of the heat. Be

careful about using the same vessel in which you heated the chocolate.

I know it's convenient, and that's what I do, you just gotta be more

careful about over heating the chocolate.

Overheating the chocolate will make the cocoa butter separate from the

cocoa solids, and that's a bad thing. Indication that you're overheating

the chocolate is either chocolate bloom in the hardened chocolate or out

and out separation of cocoa butter in the chocolate soup.

**What is couverture?**

Couverture is a special type of chocolate that has more cocoa

butter than regular chocolate, anywhere from 33% to 38% for a really good

brand. This type of chocolate is used as a coating for things like truffles

("couverture" is French for "covering") There are two ways of coating

candies, either by hand dipping into melted chocolate or enrobing, gently

pouring chocolate over the treat.

**How do I melt chocolate and what's the best kind to use?**

There are two ways to melt chocolate, in a double boiler or in a

microwave:

1. Double boiler method: A double boiler is basically two pots

designed to fit together for melting wand warming fragile foods. The

bottom pot holds a bit of water - never enough to touch the bottom of the

second pot, the top holds the food, in this case chocolate. You should

never place chocolate directly on a heat source, you run the risk of

scorching it.

Cut the chocolate up into small pieces, this will reduce the

melting time. Adjust the heat so that the water in the bottom pot gets

hot but doesn't begin to boil. Place the chocolate in the top pot and stir

every so often. Dark and bittersweet chocolate are the most 'hardy' forms

of chocolate, they will require less stirring than milk and white

chocolates, which will burn very easily if you do not pay close attention.

2. Microwave method: Place chopped pieces of chocolate into a

microwave proof bowl and heat it in the microwave for 30 seconds. Remove

the bowl, stir what you can then return it to the microwave for another 30

seconds. Continue this until the chocolate is just about melted. You might

be tempted to increase the time intervals, but remember that warmed

chocolate will keep its shape, even if it is melted, unless it is stirred.

Don't judge time on looks alone. When the chocolate is almost completely

melted, remove it from the microwave and stir, letting the warmth of the

bowl and surrounding chocolate complete the melting.

Here are some suggestions for brands to use (from a post by from Pete again)

\_Cook's Illustrated\_ Nov/Dec ['94] issue contains an article by Bishop and

Meldrich that ranks the following chocolates in the following order. The

evaluation was by a dozen or so refined Californian palates, so it should

work for you.

**I was melting some chocolate, and suddenly it changed from a shiny,**

**smooth liquid to a dull, thick paste. What happened?**

As discussed before, chocolate is very sensitive. Any slight variance

from the instructions can cause disastrous results. What you have described

here is called seizing. Seizing can happen for several reasons:

1. The chocolate is burned. Even temperatures that aren't too hot

for your finger can be too hot for chocolate. When melting chocolate, keep

the heat low and keep stirring, especially for milk and white chocolates.

2. A \*small\* amount of moisture has been added. Chocolate is very

finicky about liquids. Even the moisture from a damp spoon can contaminate

a batch of melting chocolate. This is what happens after a while to

chocolate fondue - moisture from strawberries or cheese can ruin the

texture. Be careful if you are melting pure chocolate by itself to keep

everything very dry.

3. Cool liquids have been added. Another oddity about chocolate:

small amounts of liquid can spoil melted chocolate, but large amounts are

o.k., so long as the liquid is warmed to match the temperature of the

melted chocolate. If you add cold cream or milk, for example, the chocolate

will begin to solidify and you'll end up with a mess.

Regardless of how your chocolate gets seized, you'll have to throw it out

and start again. There is no way to "un-seize" and remelt chocolate once

it has been contaminated in this way.

**Is chocolate really an aphrodisiac?**

Chocolate is the traditional gift of love, ranking right up there

with roses as the most romantic gift one can give. But is it really an

aphrodisiac? There is some evidence that the answer might be yes. Chocolate

contains three substances, caffeine, theobromine and phenyethylamine that

might be related to this myth. Caffeine acts as a stimulant. Theobromine

stimulates the heart muscle and the nervous system. And phenyethylamine is

reputed <no conclusive proof exists yet> to be a mood elevator and an

anti-depressant.

The combination of these three substances, giving you extra energy,

making your heart beat faster, making you a bit jumpy and slightly

giddy....well, you can see how chocolate could be linked to love. In fact,

Montezuma used to drink a frothy chocolate beverage before going to visit

one of his wives. But before you go out to buy several cases of chocolate

to ply your lover with tonight, remember that these substances show up only

in small quantities in chocolate.

**Can I give chocolate to my dog (cat, bird, other pet)?**

Unequivocally, no. The theobromine in chocolate that stimulates the

cardiac and nervous systems is too much for dogs, especially smaller pups.

A chocolate bar is poisonous to dogs and can even be lethal. The same holds

true for cats, and other household pets.

**How much caffeine is in chocolate?**

Although there is less caffeine in chocolate that there is in a cup

of coffee, people who are avoiding caffeine should unfortunately stay away

from chocolate as well. There are about 30 milligrams of caffeine in your

average chocolate bar, while a cup of coffee contains around 100 to 150

milligrams. For more information on the specifics of caffeine in chocolate,

consult the Caffeine FAQ, available on the WWW at

http://daisy.uwaterloo.ca/~alopez-o/caffaq.html

**Doesn't chocolate cause acne?**

This is another myth about chocolate. While some people might be

allergic to chocolate, or some of its ingredients, the belief that chocolate

causes acne universally has been disproven by doctors for some time.

**My chocolate has gray streaks. It is okay to use?**

That’s called bloom and it happens when the chocolate melts or gets warm, and then cools again without being tempered.When you buy chocolate, it is already tempered. However if it’s exposed to heat or melted, it can fall out of temper and lose its emulsification. (You can read my instructions for how to temper chocolate.)Those streaks that you see are harmless swirls of cocoa fat rising to the surface because when the chocolate was warmed,it lost its emulsion (like chicken stock or vinaigrette, which separates when heated, then cooled). Similarly,if there are crystal-like formations on the surface, those indicate ‘sugar bloom’ and the chocolate is safe to use. In either case, the chocolate can be melted and used as normal. If there is green mold, or anything furry, that means the chocolate got damp. In that case, it should be tossed.

**How long does chocolate last?**

Contrary to what you may hear, dark chocolate lasts around five years. That’s in part due to the high amount of antioxidants,as well as the sugar, which is a preservative. Milk chocolate and white chocolate contain milk solids and should be used within a year.

**Why does chocolate and liquid melted together sometimes become grainy?**

Chocolate is an emulsion, which means when you add something to it, and heat it, you break that emulsion. When melting chocolate, make sure you have at least 1 part liquid to 4 parts chocolate. So if you have 1 ounce of water and melt it with 8 ounces of chocolate,that won’t work and you’ll end up with a seized, grainy mass. You need at least 2 ounces of liquid for 8 ounces of chocolate, or at least 1 part liquid to 4 parts chocolate by weight.

Pure oil, such as peppermint or essential oils, can be added to chocolate in any

quantity since the oil doesn’t break the emulsion like water or other liquids do.

**What’s the difference between bitter and bittersweet chocolate?**

Bitter chocolate contains no sugar and is often called “unsweetened” or “baking” chocolate. In some countries it’s called 100% cacao since it’s composed only of ground up cocoa beans, and nothing else. Because bitter chocolate has no sugar and no added fat (cocoa beans are about half fat), it is more stubborn to melt and may be slightly grainy in custard and ice cream recipes. Often that can be mitigated by whirling the mixture in an electric mixer before cooking or churning it.

There is so substitution of bittersweet and unsweetened chocolate for the other, although if you don’t have unsweetened chocolate, you can replicate it by mixing 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder with 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil or melted butter to equal 1 ounce of unsweetened (bitter) chocolate. Mix them together as a paste and you can use that for unsweetened chocolate in recipes. If you live outside the United States, unsweetened chocolate can often be found at baking supply shops.

**Why may my chocolate have thickened?**

Due to constant bowl rotation and agitation of the chocolate ,the viscosity will increase.A typical batch of (dark) chocolate, depending on room conditions,will stay in perfect temper for between 45 to 90 minutes. Thickening is a sign of overseeding,overtempering, or over crystalization.

As stated, the nature of the machine dictates roughly an hour of optimum dipping time roughly an hour of optimum dipping time before overtempering begins.

**Do I need to keep the chocolates in a fridge?**

No. Please do not store the chocolates in a fridge as it is harmful for the chocolate.They simply need to be stored in a cool dark environment. We recommend to store them in the bridal suite or a private office.

\*Please do not leave the chocolates by a window, heating vent or in a savory kitchen as they tend to become very hot.

**How are chocolates delivered?**

We offer international delivery service across the World with PostNL. We guarantee that wherever in the World our delicious chocolates are shipped to, they will arrive in perfect condition.

**How do I make chocolate covered strawberries?**

Covering strawberries is not an easy task, but if you exercise a

little patience, you can come up with an excellent dessert treat. The main

thing to remember: Make sure the strawberries are \_DRY\_. Remember, even

the slightest moisture can ruin an entire batch of chocolate. If it's a

real humid day, wait until tomorrow, you'll have better success.

Prepare a cookie sheet or other flat surface with wax paper, small

enough to fit into your refrigerator. Lay your \*dry\* strawberries out on

a plate. Melt some chocolate, following the steps outlined above. Holding

each strawberry by the stem, dip it into the chocolate and place it on the

wax paper. If the chocolate gets too thick, return it to the heat, carefully.

Place the finished strawberries in the refrigerator and allow them to cool.

This is probably the best place to keep them; unless you are sure you've

tempered your chocolate well, the chocolate will melt at room temperature.

Some people choose to add a bit of baker's wax or paraffin to the chocolate.

This is an edible substance that also helps to keep the chocolate solid at

room temperature. Purely a subjective move, not necessary.

**What is the best chocolate?**

That is a tough question. Like anything edible, many things come into play. Do you like bitter chocolate? Or one that is sweeter? Do you prefer a roasted flavor? Or one that is softer, and creamier?

I tell people that the best chocolate is the one that tastes best to them. So I encourage folks to taste as many chocolates as they can, and choose one they like best.

**What Country Makes the Best Chocolate?**

Like the previous question, that’s very tough to say. Almost all cocoa beans are grown close to the equator, then shipped for processing, so there is nothing geographically advantageous if they’re processed in America, Belgium, France, or Switzerland. Most of the quality of the finished chocolate comes from the quality of the raw beans, their fermentation, then the roasting, grinding, and mixing at the factory.

**I Should Only Bake with Top-Quality, Very Expensive Chocolate. Right?**

When you melt chocolate and add it to a batter, such as for brownies or cookies, the finer points of an expensive chocolate may get lost. And while those fancy chocolates may be excellent for nibbling, I’m not sure if using an extremely pricey or rare chocolate is best of baking. I recommend sticking with a middle-range chocolate for baking.

Similarly, many of the new high-percentage chocolate, boasting cocoa contents of 70% and above are very acid and can cause creams and ganaches to break. So I recommend following the advice in the recipe, or using a dark chocolate in the 35-64% range, for best results.

**What is up with those percentages on the wrapper? Who cares?**

In the past few years, chocolate has become more of a gourmet food, tasted and talked about in much the same way as wine. The percentage you see on the wrappers of some of the better chocolates is the percentage of cacao (i.e. ground up cocoa beans) in the bar.

Some people prefer bars with a very high cacao content (up to 99%), others, myself included, prefer a middle of-the-road bar, with about 55-70% cacao. The percentages tell a chocolate connoisseur about how chocolatey the bar will taste. The more cacao, the healthier the bar – at 99% cacao, there isn’t much room for sugar!

**Is chocolate bad for you?**

Cacao, the stuff that chocolate is made from, is quite good for you. It is a powerful antioxidant. But chocolate is made from cacao plus other things, like sugar. Sugar, obviously, isn’t all that good for you.

The key to finding healthy chocolate is to select products with a high cacao content and quality, preferably organic ingredients. Dr. Andrew Weil “recommend[s] a piece of good-quality dark chocolate as a snack.”

**What does “organic” chocolate mean?**

Organic food, including organic chocolate, is grown without the use of most conventional pesticides, without synthetic pesticides or sewage sludge, without genetic modifications or radiation. Organic meat is free of growth hormones and antibiotics. In the US, the USDA must inspect a farm before its wares can be labeled organic. Organic farmers also tend to favor renewable energy and other conservation practices.

**What does Fair Trade chocolate mean?**

When farmers and laborers are paid a fair price for the products they produce, rather than being exploited for cheap labor, that is considered “Fair Trade.” Because they are paid a fair price, producers can avoid cost-cutting practices that sacrifice quality and are destructive to the environment. For example, Fair Trade cacao is typically organic and shade-grown, meaning it is grown under the canopy of the rainforest rather than in a clear cut field.

Products become Fair Trade Certified based on the standards set forth by Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International, a consortium of trade groups throughout the world who establish the criteria for Fair Trade products.

**What is the gelatin source?**

The gelatin we currently use in many of our fillings is sourced from kosher certified beef. However, we will be replacing it with a plant based ingredient by the end of 2019.

**Can you make limited editions year round?**

Limited Edition flavors are only available for a certain times during the year. The Limited Edition program allows consumer to have a variety of tasty treats throughout the year, in addition to our standard line up of fine products.

**Do all excellence bars include sesame allergen warning ?**

We do have a facility that produces products containing sesame. As such, we take precautions to safe-guard our consumers’ health by including the sesame allergen warning on the packaging.

We also sell Excellence blocks that are manufactured in a different facility which do not carry a sesame warning. Please, check the ingredient list each time to verify if a product contains sesame as an ingredient or to ensure traces as cross contamination.

**What is used instead of sugar?**

The sweetener used in ChocoWheels No Sugar Added is called Maltitol and is the closest to sugar in sweetness level and volume but with not as many calories.

**Do you have a sugar-free bar or one with a sugar substitute?**

At the moment, we don't have any plans to produce a sugar-free ChocoWheel's bar or to produce one with a sugar substitute. Our mission is 100% slave free chocolate. To achieve this, we have to make the most amazing ethically produced chocolate, so we can help cocoa farmers create a better future for themselves and inspire other chocolate makers to follow our example. In other words, we want to change the mainstream chocolate industry. Sugar-free bars are still too much of a niche product. Producing one won't help the cocoa farmers. But this may not always be the case. We do our best to always be one step ahead.

**Can you send me an allergen list?**

We have found that allergen lists quickly become outdated as our product lines change over time. Rather than have you make purchase decisions based on outdated information, we encourage you to check the ingredient label on the package. This label provides accurate, current information about all the ingredients in the package.

**How can I tell the "best before" date of a product?**

There is an ink stamped "BB" or "Best By" date code on our products. This best by date represents the month and year until which the product is expected to be within its peak freshness.

**Do you do make custom gift baskets and chocolates?**

For large volume orders, we can tie a customer-supplied ribbon or sticker, or include a customer-supplied item within one of our baskets. Lead time runs 3-6 weeks from time of approval. Contact our corporate sales department at corpsales@chocowheels.com for more information.

**Is your chocolate alkalized?**

The alkali process, or Dutch Process, is used to neutralize the acidity normally found in chocolate. The process produces a powder with no cocoa butter by pressing the pure cacao paste at very high pressure to produce a fat free powder. Our dark chocolate and hot chocolates are made using alkalized cocoa. For more on chocolate terminology, visit our Chocolate Terms page.

**Does chocolate increase cholesterol levels ?**

Quite the opposite, in fact. Once it has been absorbed by your body, cocoa produces 72% unsaturated fatty acids which actually reduce your cholesterol level and clean your arteries. It contains only 20% saturated fatty acids - the kind which aren't so good for you. There's very little cholesterol in dark chocolate made from 100% cocoa butter, like that of Chocowheel. In milk chocolate, the cholesterol varies from 15 to 18mg per 100g which is pretty insignificant.

**Does chocolate contain magnesium ?**

We all need magnesium in our diets to promote good neuro-vascular function, but our normal food intake barely provides the minimum. The good news is that chocolate is rich in magnesium.

**Is chocolate good for lovers?**

The Aztec Emperor Montezuma, Casanova, Madame De Pompadour and the Marquis de Sade certainly all thought so. Although it's not really an aphrodisiac, one of the substances it contains, phenylethylamine, causes your body to react in the same way

as it does when you're in love. So chocolate may not make you a great lover, but you can't help loving chocolate!

**Do you have any secrets for making great truffles?**

Start with a well-balanced recipe like this one . Follow the instructions for letting the ganache set up for 12 hours at room temperature and for scooping and dipping in tempered chocolate. I like to dip them twice letting them start to crystallize in between dippings. Store them at room temperature in airtight containers.

**What is compound chocolate?**

Compound is a 'chocolate' made with fats other than cocoa butter. It it is not real chocolate and does not require tempering. You simply melt it to use it. If you take it to too high of a temperature it may become lumpy. It does not taste nor behave like real chocolate.

**Does chocolate cause tooth decay?**

The more sugar there is in your chocolate, the more likely the chocolate is not good for your teeth. However, if you were eating 100% cacao, the chocolate itself would not promote tooth decay, and in fact, because cacao naturally contains anti-bacterial enzymes this would help prevent plaque formation.

**What is white chocolate?**

White chocolate is made with a blend of sugar, cocoa butter, milk products, vanilla, and a fatty substance called lecithin. Technically, white chocolate is not a chocolate —and it doesn’t really taste like one—because it doesn’t contain chocolate solids. When cocoa beans are removed from their pods, fermented, dried, roasted, cracked open, and their shells discarded, what results is a nib.

Chocolate nibs are ground into a paste called chocolate liquor. Chocolate liquor can be separated into cocoa solids, which provide the flavour, and cocoa butter, which is the fat. Though white chocolate contains extracted cocoa butter, it lacks the component that defines real chocolate white “chocolate” is the most fragile form of all chocolates and close attention must be paid to it when melting.  It can burn and seize very easily unless heated very slowly.

**What is ganache?**

Ganache is a mixture of bitter (or dark) chocolate and cream. Depending on its temperature and consistency, it can be used as a frosting, glaze, filling, or sauce.

Understanding the chocolate Ganache:

The chocolate ganache is all about the proportion of cream to chocolate. Glazes have thinner ( pouring )consistency so a higher percentage of cream is required.

A thicker ganache for frosting or for rolling into truffles needs to be stiffer, so the chocolate percentage is higher.

To Make Layer cake filling and thick glaze: 1:1, equal parts chocolate and cream.

Chocolate truffles: 2:1, two parts chocolate to one part cream.

Soft icing and runny glaze: 1:2, one part chocolate to two parts cream.

(1:1 ratio means 4 ounces chocolate to 4 ounces cream)

**Why are some chocolates more expensive, than other chocolates?**

The short answer is that good quality chocolate has a high proportion of cocoa constituents with little or no substitution.

What to look for: High cocoa solids content. Chocolate with less than 50% cocoa solids will have little real chocolate taste and those with more than 70% will have a much more complex and fine chocolate taste.

Cocoa butter content: Chocolate makers tend to substitute vegetable oil in place of cocoa butter to reduce costs. Cocoa butter prices have increased in recent years due to demand in the cosmetics industry.

Smooth texture: This comes from the cocoa spending a longer period being crushed in the concher.

Conversely, these are indications of a poor quality chocolate: the Low proportion of cocoa solids. Use of vegetable oil instead of cocoa butter Chocolates with low cocoa solids content, such as milk chocolate, are usually inappropriate for baking due to their proportionally low chocolate flavour. The baking cocoa powder itself is in fact just another word for cocoa solids, and this is why it is favoured when baking: it is the pure chocolate flavour.

**What is milk chocolate?**

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Standard of Identity, milk chocolate must contain a minimum of 10% chocolate liquor, 12% milk solids and 3.39% milk fat. The standard for all chocolates specify that only nutritive carbohydrate sweeteners can be used and that optional flavors cannot imitate the flavor of chocolate, milk and butter.

**How are you eco-friendly?**

Our chocolate bars are placed in recyclable bags and outer wrapped in paper. Many of our printed materials use soy-based and vegetable-based inks. Our other packaging, including jars and tins, are easily reusable, so get creative.  In-house, we have a recycling program, and our staff are very conscious about reusing boxes, tins, and other containers to reduce our waste.  We also focus on local sourcing when possible, especially for our confectionary work where we highlight the bounties of the Hudson Valley by picking fresh raspberries from Westwind Orchard for example.

**How much chocolate do you produce in one day?**

Depending on how many candy makers we have working that day, anywhere from 40 to 250 pounds.

**Do you ever sell the 10 pound blocks of chocolate?**

Yes, you would be surprised at how many we sell. Some people buy them just to eat. Others buy them to make candy at home. I'm sure they don't nibble as they work.

**Are your chocolates kosher?**

We are OKD Kosher Certified for almost all of our product line. Both kosher and non-kosher products are sold on our site. Please look for the OKD symbol on products that are certified kosher.

**What’s the difference between the regular, Deluxe and Mini subscriptions?**

The regular subscription is our classic box, which includes 5-6 different items from around Aotearoa, carefully sourced for top-notch flavour and to fit the theme of the month. Along with the chocolate we include our tasting notes. Which includes info about the items in the box and the chocolate makers and chocolatiers who made them.

The Deluxe includes the same chocolate and tasting notes, but more of the best stuff. There will always be extra bonbons, and a larger serve or double of a couple of the other premium items. It’s well suited to those who are sharing the box with a spouse or friend, or if you want the joy to last a little longer. This box will include 7-8 items.

The Mini has 3-4 of the items for the month, and a pared back version of our tasting notes – a great wee taster or a lovely ongoing gift for someone.

**Why did I get charged Tax?**

State and local jurisdictions require that ChocoWheels collect applicable sales tax based on the product and shipping destination.

**Do you offer volume discounts?**

Yes - the more you shop, the more you save. Place an order of $200 or more and get a discount of 15%. Discounts are calculated on merchandise total, before shipping and/or tax, and excluding charges for custom-printed ribbons.

**What is bean to bar craft chocolate?**

Bean to bar chocolate makers are those who make chocolate from raw cacao beans, going through the process of roasting, cracking & winnowing, refining and conching. This is as opposed to most other big-scale chocolate manufacturers who make chocolate using semi-finished ingredients such as cocoa mass. Chocolate makers also usually differentiate ourselves from chocolatiers who melt store-bought couvertures to mold into various shapes and to make ganache.

**What is the size and weight of the chocolate bar?**

The size will be 108 x 75 x 7 mm with packaging and the weight of the chocolate bar will be 21grams.

**Who creates your chocolate recipes?**

Our recipes are guided by the creative mind of Norbert Brockmann, a master chocolatier with over 50 years of experience and family recipes.

**What is pate de fruit?**

Pate de Fruit is a type of "fruit jelly" used in pastries.  It is made from fruit puree, sugar, and pectin.  I like making it to use as a layer in my truffles to really highlight a fruit flavor.

**Are your chocolates safe for coeliacs?**

All of the ingredients we use are naturally free from gluten. However, while we take every care to ensure that our chocolates are free from any traces of gluten, this is a personal decision for the individual. We carefully select ingredients whereby the product labelling indicates the absence of gluten and from suppliers where the risk of cross contamination is reduced or removed. We produce our chocolates in a licensed commercial kitchen that does not handle any gluten.