

Fluvanna County Public Library

Spice of the Month Club

Cocoa Powder

Cocoa was first cultivated in ancient South America. During the Age of Exploration, the Spanish Conquistadors introduced it to Europe. In the 1850s, steam-powered machines allowed for the mass production of cocoa powder. Today, over 4.5 million tons of cocoa are consumed around the world every year.

Cocoa powder, an unsweetened chocolate product, adds deep chocolate flavor to desserts and beverages. Cocoa powder occurs when the fat, called cocoa butter, gets removed from the cacao beans during processing. The leftover dried solids get ground into the product sold as cocoa powder.

Cocoa Powder vs. Chocolate - Bar chocolate combines cocoa solids and cocoa butter along with sugar and some form of emulsifier such as lecithin to hold the ingredients together. Cocoa powder contains primarily cocoa solids, with only about 10 to 15 percent cocoa butter vs. the 50 percent or more in chocolate.

Higher-quality cocoa powder retains slightly more cocoa butter than lesser brands. Cocoa powder is the missing ingredient in so-called "white chocolate," which is produced by combining cocoa butter and sugar (plus an emulsifier) but no actual cocoa solids.

The two basic types of cocoa powder are Dutch process and natural. For baking, the type of cocoa you use does matter, because the acidity of the cocoa powder might be the only thing activating the leavening agent in the recipe. If a recipe calls for baking soda, for example, natural cocoa powder works fine, because the acidity in the cocoa activates the baking soda. If a recipe calls for baking powder (or both baking powder and baking soda), then it probably also calls for Dutch-processed cocoa powder.

Health Benefits

Cocoa powder provides lots of benefits, especially if your powder is at least 72% cocoa. Here's a look at some of the health benefits of cocoa powder:

- Polyphenol benefits - Cocoa powder is rich in antioxidants called polyphenols. These natural chemicals are great for cardiovascular and overall health. They can help moderate cholesterol and support your blood vessels. They also can lower inflammation and may help prevent cancer.
- May improve brain health - Research suggests that adding more cocoa powder to your diet helps improve your attention, working memory, and general cognition. It may also help restore cognitive performance in people with sleep loss.
- May improve your immune system - Cocoa powder contains iron, zinc, and selenium. These minerals help your body function and boost your immune system.
- May protect against the side effects of radiation therapy - Consuming cocoa powder can be helpful if you've been diagnosed with cancer and undergo radiation therapy. The selenium in cocoa powder has been shown to limit the negative side effects of radiotherapy in people with cancer.
- May keep muscles and nerves healthy - Magnesium is important for regulating muscle contraction and helping with nerve function. The mineral also helps protect nerve cells and reduce the risk of neurological disorders. Cocoa powder contains magnesium, which means consuming it can help you maintain healthy muscle and nervous system function.

- May help heal wounds - Chocolate made with 90% cocoa contains plenty of zinc, a mineral that is useful for healing wounds.
- May reduce heart disease risk - Flavonols, a type of flavonoid found in dark chocolate, help protect you from heart disease by lowering your blood pressure, improving blood flow, and preventing cell damage. Cocoa powder also contains polyphenols, which are antioxidants that help improve cholesterol and blood sugar levels and reduce the risk of heart disease.
- May reduce inflammation - Cocoa powder is rich in theobromine, which helps reduce inflammation and can protect you from diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.
- May help you lose weight - Since cocoa is rich in phytonutrients but low in fat and sugar, the calories you get from cocoa powder is packed with healthy chemicals.
- May improve mood - Several natural chemicals in cocoa might help improve mood. Plus, cocoa might raise levels of dopamine and serotonin, which are neurotransmitters (brain chemicals) that trigger happiness and pleasure. A review of several small studies found that eating chocolate may help lower depression and anxiety.

Chocolate Oatmeal Cookies (3 dozen)

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ cup margarine
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup white sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 ¼ cups rolled oats
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips



1. Gather all ingredients. Preheat the oven to 350F. Grease cookie sheets.
2. Stir flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon together in a large bowl; set aside.
3. Beat margarine, brown sugar, and white sugar together in a large bowl with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Stir in flour mixture using a wooden spoon. Mix in oats and chocolate chips.
4. Drop spoonful of dough 2 inches apart onto the prepared cookie sheets.
5. Bake in the preheated oven until edges are golden, about 8 to 10 minutes. Cool on the baking sheet briefly before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.
6. Stack of chocolate chip oatmeal cookies on a table with milk in the background

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/25023/chocolate-oatmeal-cookies/>

Chocolate Waffles (10 waffles)

Waffles:

- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup white sugar
- 3 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 cup milk
- 2 large eggs
- 4 Tbsp. butter, melted

Hard Sauce:

- 1 Tbsp. butter, softened
- ¾ cup confectioners' sugar
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. milk
- nonstick cooking spray

1. Preheat a waffle iron.
2. Make waffles: Stir together flour, sugar, cocoa, baking powder, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Stir in milk, eggs, and butter until the mixture is smooth.
3. Make hard sauce: stir together softened butter, confectioners' sugar, vanilla extract, and milk. Sauce should be fairly stiff. Set aside.
4. Spray preheated waffle iron with nonstick cooking spray. Pour waffle mix onto hot waffle iron. Cook until golden brown. Serve hot with hard sauce.

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/24141/chocolate-waffles-i/>

Easy Microwave Chocolate Mug Cake (1 serving)

- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup white sugar
- 2 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- ⅛ tsp. baking soda
- ⅛ tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. milk
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 1 Tbsp. water
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract

1. Mix flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt together in a large microwave-safe mug; stir in milk, canola oil, water, and vanilla extract.
2. Cook in the microwave until cake is done in the middle, about 1 minute 45 seconds.

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/241038/microwave-chocolate-mug-cake/>



Triple Chocolate Skillet Cookie (6-8 servings)

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup semisweet or bittersweet chocolate chips
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup good quality white chocolate chips
- ice cream or whipped cream, optional, for serving



1. Preheat oven to 350°F degrees. In a large bowl, using a hand mixer or stand mixer, beat butter and sugar until combined. Add egg and vanilla and mix until combined. Add flour, cocoa, baking soda, and salt, and mix until combined. By hand, stir in all but 1 tablespoon semisweet and white chocolate chips (reserve 1 tablespoon for garnish).
2. Transfer batter to a greased 10-inch ovenproof skillet (I used cast iron). Smooth the top. Bake until just set in center and pulling away from sides, 20 to 22 minutes (the center should look slightly under baked). Immediately after removing from the oven, press the remaining 1 tablespoon of chocolate chips gently into the cookie (just to make it look pretty). Serve warm right from the skillet, or allow to cool to cut cleaner slices.

<https://celebratingsweets.com/triple-chocolate-skillet-cookie/>

Cocoa Dusted Truffles (26 truffles)

- 8 oz. chocolate chips or chopped chocolate, semi sweet or bittersweet or dark
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt
- 2 Tbsp. cocoa powder , for rolling



1. Pour the 8 ounces of chocolate chips into a large heat safe bowl and set aside.
2. In a small saucepan set over medium high heat, bring the heavy cream to a bare simmer, whisking the entire time.
3. Once you see it start to have tiny bubbles around the edges, it's done.
4. Immediately pour the heavy cream over the chocolate chips and let stand for one minute. Do not mix! If you mix right away your chips won't melt and your ganache will be chunky!
5. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let sit one minute.
6. After one minute, uncover the chocolate chips and heavy cream and whisk until smooth. If there are any chunks of chips, heat the mixture in the microwave in a heat safe bowl in 5 second increments, whisking after each time until perfectly smooth.
7. Once smooth, add in the vanilla and salt and whisk again until smooth.

8. Let the ganache cool a little on the counter. About 15 min.
9. After 15 min, whisk again. Pour ganache into a pie plate or square ceramic baking pan and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
10. Fill a small bowl with a tablespoon of cocoa powder and another small bowl with a tablespoon of dark cocoa powder. If only using one type of cocoa powder, fill a small bowl with 2 tablespoons of cocoa powder.
11. Using a teaspoon, scoop out a teaspoon of chocolate ganache. Roll it into a ball and drop it into the cocoa powder to coat completely. Place onto parchment paper lined pie or tart dish.
12. Refrigerate until set. About 15-20 minutes.

<https://laneandgreyfare.com/chocolate-truffles/>

Hot Chocolate for One

- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 to 3 Tbsp. Cocoa powder
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 cup milk
- Salt (just a pinch)

1. Mix sugar, cocoa and salt in large mug.
2. Heat milk in microwave on High 1-1 ½ minutes or until hot.
3. Gradually add hot milk to cocoa mixture in mug, stirring until well blended.
4. Stir in vanilla.



<https://www.hersheyland.com/recipes/hot-cocoa-for-one.html>

Spicy Cocoa Almonds (16 servings – 4 cups)

- 4 cups raw unsalted almonds
- 2 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. granular sucralose sweetener (such as Splenda®)
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper (Optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Place the almonds in a single layer on a rimmed baking tray.
2. Bake in the preheated oven for 5 minutes. Stir and continue baking until fragrant and toasty, about 5 minutes more. Let cool on tray for 2 minutes; pour into a bowl.
3. Add cocoa powder, sucralose, and cayenne pepper. Stir with a spatula until well coated. Pour almonds back onto the baking tray to cool completely.



<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/277875/spicy-cocoa-almonds/>

Library Resources

Everything Chocolate by America's Test Kitchen – 641.6374 AME
 Forest Gump: My Favorite Chocolate Recipes – 641.8 FOR
 Mary Berry's Baking Bible – 641.815 BER

Pork Tenderloin with Cocoa Spice Rub

- 1 pork tenderloin, approx. 1 lb., trimmed of silver skin
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable or olive oil
- Spice Rub
- 2 ¼ tsp. cocoa powder, (regular, not dark)
- ½ tsp. chili powder
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper, to taste
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground cloves
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. Trim tenderloin of any silver skin on the surface. (See notes.) Rub the meat with oil.
3. In a small bowl, stir together spice rub ingredients. Thoroughly coat the oiled tenderloin with the spice rub, rubbing it into the meat. If one end is thin, tuck it under.
4. Place tenderloin on a rack in a roasting pan or on a rimmed baking sheet and roast for 25-30 minutes until a thermometer reads 145-150°. Rest for 10-15 minutes then carve into slices that are ½" thick or more.

<https://chefdonnaathome.com/pork-tenderloin-with-cocoa-spice-rub/>



Slow Cooker Beef and Vegetable Stew (8 servings)

- 3 cups beef broth, divided
- 2 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
- ½ cup red wine
- 2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. Herbs de Provence
- 1 ½ tsp. salt, divided
- 1 tsp. black pepper, divided
- 3 cups peeled and cubed potatoes
- 2 cups peeled and chopped carrots
- 1 cup peeled and chopped celery
- 1 cup peeled and chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped dried apricots
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- ½ jalapeño pepper, minced
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil, divided
- 3 lbs boneless steak, trimmed of excess fat (ribeye or top loin works well)
- 3 Tbsp. cornstarch
- Fresh parsley, minced



1. Warm about ½ cup of the beef broth and add it to a large bowl. Add the cocoa powder and whisk until it's well incorporated. Then stir in the remaining beef broth, tomato sauce, red wine, balsamic vinegar, Herbs de Provence and ½ tsp. each of the salt and black pepper. Set aside.
2. Add the potatoes, carrots, celery, onion, apricots, garlic and jalapeño to your slow cook. Drizzle with about 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil and stir to coat.
3. Cut the steak into 8 equal-sized pieces and season both sides with the remaining salt and black pepper. Heat the remaining vegetable oil in a heavy bottom pan over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add the steak and cook about 2 minutes per side, just until browned.
4. Lay the browned steak on top of the vegetables in your slow cooker (it will overlap some). Then pour the broth mixture over top. Cover your slow cooker and cook on the "low" setting for about 10-11 hours or the "high" setting for about 5-6 hours. The vegetables and steak should be tender.
5. After cooking, ladle out about 1 cup of the broth from your slow cooker and transfer it to a small bowl. Add the cornstarch and whisk until it's dissolved and the mixture is thick. Scrape this mixture into to your slow cooker and stir gently to combine. Cover and cook for an additional 20-30 minutes before serving. Garnish with fresh parsley for serving, if desired.
6. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in your refrigerator for 2-3 days.

<https://www.floatingkitchen.net/slow-cooker-beef-and-vegetable-stew/>

Chocolate Pudding for 2

- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 4 tsp. cornstarch
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 cup milk
- 2 Tbsp. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract



1. Mix sugar, cocoa, cornstarch and salt in heavy bottom saucepan. Gradually add 1/2 of the milk, whisking until smooth. Add remaining mix, whisking to combine.
2. Over medium heat, continue whisking until pudding thickens and comes to a boil, about 5 minutes. Allow to boil 1 minute longer and then remove from heat.
3. Add chocolate chips and vanilla extract and whisk until chocolate melts and pudding is smooth.
4. Divide between 2 dessert dishes, cover with plastic wrap touching the surface of the pudding so that it doesn't form a skin (yuck!). Cool completely- overnight is best.
5. Serve with whipped cream.

<https://www.food.com/recipe/chocolate-chocolate-pudding-for-2-386792>

Small-batch Brownies For Two (8 servings)

- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted and set aside
- 1/3 cup flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp. + 2 tsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/8 tsp sea salt
- 1/8 tsp baking powder



- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup milk chocolate chips, melted smooth

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a loaf pan with parchment paper or aluminum foil.
2. Melt butter in a small dish in the microwave and set aside to cool slightly.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, sea salt, and baking powder.
4. Add egg and vanilla and stir.
5. Add melted butter and mix until smooth.
6. Fold in melted chocolate and stir until just combined.
7. Pour batter into a prepared loaf pan and bake for 20-22 minutes, rotating halfway through. Brownies will puff up slightly as they bake, but the top will fall when they are done.
8. Allow brownies to cool in the pan for 15-30 minutes. Lift out of the pan, slice, and serve.
9. Store brownies in an airtight container for 3-4 days or freeze.

<https://kristineinbetween.com/small-batch-brownies-for-two/>

Small Batch Chocolate Cookies (4 servings)

- 4 Tbsp. butter room temp
- 4 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp. cocoa powder
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup chocolate chips
- flaked sea salt for sprinkling



1. Preheat oven to 350 and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place the butter and sugars in a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment. Beat on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes, or mix together in a medium size bowl. Add egg yolk and vanilla and mix until smooth.
3. Slowly mix in dry ingredients, being careful not to over mix. I usually stop when I still have some flour remnants around the bowl. Stir the chocolate chips into the dough until combined.
4. Scoop the dough into large balls, I like to use the ¼ cup cookie or ice cream scoop. Place a few extra chocolate chips on the top of the cookie dough balls and sprinkle with a bit of salt.
5. Bake the cookies for 11-12 minutes. Sprinkle with a bit more salt when they come out of the oven.

<https://thesaltedweets.com/small-batch-chocolate-cookies/>