



The New Healthy Chocolate

Our take on the latest offerings of chocolates that promise bonus health benefits.



- Photo: Media Bakery

by Katie D. Neal

If you're a chocoholic, you probably already know this sweet indulgence actually has some health benefits, thanks to a type of antioxidant called polyphenols that fight inflammation in the body. But what if chocolate packed even more of a nutritional punch? Increasingly, confectioners are adding vitamins and other supplements to their products, or coming up with creative ways to lower the calorie count. But are these so-called "functional chocolates" as good as your favorites? We rounded up some of the latest "healthy chocolate" options and put them to a taste test. (It's a tough job, but we pushed through.) Here's what we discovered.

Maramor Chocolates

10 pieces, \$12.99 • www.maramor.com

This line of "chocolate that loves you back" included some of the best treats we tasted, but also our least favorite. The omega-3-fortified variety had a distinct and unpalatable fishy flavor. However, the version with added calcium and D3, the type of vitamin D synthesized in the body with sun exposure, had a rich flavor that we thought was better than other chocolate calcium supplements on the market.



CocoXan

7 pieces, \$11.99 • www.xanconfections.com

The adorable packaging of these truffles immediately got our attention, as did the bright, fruity taste. CocoXan offers varieties specially formulated for PMS (with chasteberry and bilberry), pregnancy (with folic acid and DHA) and brain health (vitamins A, C, D3, E and more). With a flavor every bit as good as classic truffles like Russell Stover, these would make a great gift.



Bubble Chocolate

4 bars, \$10 • www.bubblechocolate.com

A different spin on “healthy chocolate,” a bar of Bubble Chocolate isn’t supplemented, but instead offers “fewer calories per volume” than regular chocolate, due to an aerated texture. Six squares of either the milk or dark chocolate variety makes for a good-sized piece that weighs in at a modest 100 calories, though some of our testers said they’d opt for a smaller portion of their favorite brand instead.



Good Cacao

1.5-oz bar, \$3.99-\$4.79 • www.goodcacao.com

Chocolate with 70+ percent cacao is an acquired taste to start, though it packs a powerful antioxidant punch, and this vegan formula had a grittier texture than we’re used to. But if bitter’s your bag, we thought the coconut bar deserved props for adding omega-3s without altering the flavor in an off-putting way.



Attune Probiotics Chocolate Bars

.07-oz bar, \$1.50 • www.attunefoods.com

Of all the brands we sampled, we thought these were the most indistinguishable from “regular” chocolate. The texture and taste were terrific, and they come in familiar varieties like chocolate crisp, chocolate almond and chocolate mint as well as a plain version. They may be a bit pricier than your favorite candy bar, but the probiotic boost makes them well worth the swap.



Sunsweet Plum Sweets

6-oz. bag, \$3.99 • www.sunsweet.com

Dip prunes in dark chocolate, change their name to “dried plums” and you have a sweet, healthy, stigma-free snack! Not only did we find these to be delicious, but the combo of chocolate and fruit offers a sizeable dose of antioxidants. A word of caution: They’re not particularly

low-calorie, so watch your portions carefully. (Your digestive tract will thank you for that, too.)



Gnosis Chocolates

2-oz. bar, \$9.25 • www.gnosischocolate.com

Low-glycemic as well as raw, vegan and organic, these bars weren't as sweet as most of the others we tasted, but they had a rich, satisfying texture. There are a dizzying 18 varieties of fortified chocolate, but we liked the one called "Simplicity" the best. It contains only four ingredients: cacao, agave nectar, vanilla bean and blue-green algae.

