

Making Ripples

Chocolate Worthy of Love

by Amanda Bancroft

I consider myself a chocolate lover, but some chocolate is worth loving more than others. There's no reason to become righteous if we see someone indulging in a Hershey's kiss, but there are far better ways to say "I love you" with chocolate at Valentine's Day.

There are many options to choose from, but as always, consumer choices exist along a vast continuum of harm and health. At the lowest end of the spectrum, we have products full of artificial colors and chemicals, grown by slaves, child laborers, or exploited workers using unsustainable agricultural practices that cause situations like deforestation and erosion. These products are doing their comparatively small (or large, depending on your point of view) part in damaging our health and the environment, while creating immense human and animal suffering worldwide. At the other end, there are chocolates that do their part, at various levels of success and failure, to practice sustainable agriculture and promote economic justice in order to create products that are ultimately healthier for us to consume.

It seems that the more harmful a product is, the larger the quantity that is produced and the more it gets promoted at common retailers. To balance this effect, here is a chart of brands and flavors at the less-harmful, more-healthy end of the spectrum for you to try this Valentine's Day! There are many more flavors, shapes, and brands available than those listed here. For example, Endangered Species and ChocoLove chocolate bars are better than the average choice, but still source their chocolate from the Ivory Coast and are not guaranteed to be slavery-free, according to the Food Empowerment Project. Brands like Hershey's, Mars, and Nestle are playing catch-up and all are in the (lengthy) process of gathering certifications that other yummy brands already have. I don't know about you, but I'm going for the vegan lavender truffles! Or maybe the cherry hearts...

Brand	Shape	Holiday Flavor
Askinosie*	Small & Large Bars	Dark or Milk Chocolate
Justin's Peanut Butter Cups*^	Cups	Dark or Milk Chocolate
Theo's*^	Bars	Cherry, Cinnamon & More
Equal Exchange*^	Minis & Bars	Huge Variety
Pascha*^	Bars	Dark Chocolate
Alter Eco*^	Truffles, Bars	Huge Variety
Sweetriot*	Squares, Nibs, Bars, Drops	Flax, Coconut, Quinoa & More
Rapunzel*	Bars, Hearts	Small Variety
Sjaak's*	Bars, Hearts	Lavender, Cherry, Caramel
Newman's Own*	Bars, Cups	Mocha
Mama Ganache*	Truffles, Heart Boxes	Huge Variety

*Vegan options available

^Allergen-free options available

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