

Chocolate is nature's wonder food

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THIS is not one of those articles that proclaims in bold typeface that you can eat as much chocolate as you like and stay healthy, but turns out to be a horrible, cruel lie.

This article is about how you can eat a moderate amount of chocolate guiltlessly every day – even for breakfast – and add enormously to your health by doing so. But this isn't commercial chocolate, or even 90% dark Lindt or that organic Green & Black's stuff that high-end chocolate buyers love to munch.

This is real, natural, naked chocolate. No added sugar, dairy, hydrogenated fats, artificial sweeteners or stabilisers.

And this stuff, when turned by raw food chefs Beryn and Peter Daniel with other similarly healthy, raw ingredients into a chocolate shake, mousse, cake, tart, cookies and squares, knocks the taste of a Tempo or Romany Cream sideways any day.

Packed with magnesium, antidepressant properties and antioxidants (it streaks past the goji berries on the US Department of Agriculture chart in its ability to absorb cell-damaging free radicals), the cacao bean is supposedly an appetite suppressant to boot.



RAW: A bowl of goji berries surrounded by 100% dark chocolate in beans, nibs and powder form.

Picture: Mark Soskolne

And since it happily grows in the shade, it acts as a buffer against deforestation in the rainforests. It's not called a superfood for nothing. It should be wearing a cape on its fine paper shell.

All chocolate products come from 100% bitter, dark chocolate

cacao beans which grow in the Amazon in pods that hang off the trunk of the tropical jungle tree. The pods vary in colour from purple to red to dark brown to black, and each colour has its own flavour – “a real oompa-loompa plant”.

“Everyone thinks chocolate is

unhealthy. Actually, it's not,” says Peter who, with his wife Beryn, runs raw food prep courses and, now that they've starting importing raw cacao from Ecuador, the Chocolate Love Workshop.

Eighty percent of the world's population eats 15 different foods

and chocolate is one of them, he adds. But what they're eating is not chocolate at all, but a “processed product out of the roaring doors of factories”.

Any graduate of the couple's four-week course knows that sugar, not fat, is the enemy.

A commercial chocolate bar, which they reckon is made up of about 40% sugar, forces insulin to flood into the bloodstream to burn off the excess, pushing the sugar into the tissues to be stored as fat.

However, raw chocolate is filled with healthy, necessary, “good” fat.

An evening spent among bowls of chocolate while outrageously delicious dessert after dessert is whipped up is an experience every (super)foodie should have.

And it's all in the name of health. As Mae West said, too much of a good thing *can* be wonderful.

The next Chocolate Love Workshops will be held on October 31, November 21 and December 12. Call 021 786 4068 or 074 100 7547, or e-mail info@soaring-free.com to reserve a place. The Daniels will be doing a short chocolate demo, as well as other raw food and juicing demos, in the Conscious Cooking area at the Natural & Organics Show which opens today and runs until Sunday at the CTICC.