

The Dark Side of Chocolate

Besides being a terribly addictive, harmful and health destroying substance, Chocolate has a Dark Secret: **Child Slavery!**

On August 28, 2001, I wrote a Notmilk letter describing a horrible injustice in which tens of thousands of children have been kidnapped and/or sold into slavery to support America's love for milk chocolate and chocolate milk.

Six years ago, I asked the readers of this column to write letters of protest to their own members of congress and to local newspapers to urge them to publicize this cruel and unjust system. You responded magnificently, or so I had thought. Your letters made a difference, or so I believed. The bad guys promised to change. They lied to us. We've been tricked. What appropriate behavior for those who profit most by selling Halloween candy. Treat or trick, anyone?

We did everything in our power to expose the support of slavery by Hershey, Nestle, and Mars, and also accused the phonies who owned the Chocolate SILK soymilk line of supporting slavery as well. SILK has subsequently been sold to America's largest dairy producer, Dean Foods.

Today, most of the world's cocoa beans are grown on the more than 600,000 cocoa farms located in the nation of Ivory Coast. **Tens of thousands of children have been kidnapped from their homes and sold into slavery. These children plant, pick, bag, and carry the beans for plantation owners.**

After the 2001 Notmilk articles, word of these outrages spread and the members of the chocolate industry were shamed into signing a pact to end their support of chocolate slavery.

Unfortunately, we were naive enough to take them at their word. These scum of industry have done nothing but lie about the problem and make it worse. They should be held accountable. The dairy industry is an active co-conspirator, as four pounds of milk are required to manufacture one pound of milk chocolate.

During the summer of 2007, the United Nations International Labor Organization (ILO) reported that 284,000 child laborers now work and live in slavery on Ivory Coast cocoa farms.

Chocolate consumers must be made aware that the purchase of each candy bar continues to support the world's most horrifying secret.

Are you part of the problem or part of the solution?

Is America a nation made up of moral people? If so, I ask you not to write any more letters. I ask you only to spread the word by attaching today's column to every person you know. Ask them to join you in a nation-wide boycott of chocolate this October 31st (Halloween), November 22nd (Thanksgiving), December 25th (Christmas), and January 1st (New Year's Day).

Slavery exists, and its victims are children. Please search your heart and turn your passion and compassion into action.

Please remember that with each bite of chocolate you will receive enormous pleasure while causing pain for the innocent. Together, we can end this injustice by sending a message to chocolate companies that they have created the problem and continue to support this morally corrupt system.

Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth went insane with the guilt of imagining bloodstains on her hands, and continuously was heard saying, "Out, damned spot!" For those of you with chocolate-stained hands, the guilt is yours and can only be relieved by washing your hands of this injustice. Please become part of

the solution to this horror story. Out damned spot!

Boycott all chocolate products and let as many people know why you are doing so. Let manufacturers know why you will no longer eat chocolate chip cookies or Brownies or drink hot cocoa. Do this for the kidnapped and abused boys and girls.

CHOCOLATE COATED... EYUUCK!!

Or "GIVE ME CAROB, PLEASE!"

Carob

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness, saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, . . . and his meat was locusts and wild honey."
Matthew 3:1-4

The locust (*Ceratonia siliqua*) is the fruit of the carob tree, and accepted in the East as the food on which John the Baptist fed; thus it is known as St. John's bread. The carob tree is a sturdy evergreen, growing to fifty feet in height. In the early spring it produces many large clusters of tiny pea-shaped blossoms. Rich brown fruits follow in the form of large thick pods 8" long containing 5-15 seeds which are discarded.

Chocolate has been satisfying the sweet tooth of America for many years. **However, as it grows naturally, it is highly unpalatable, bitter and unpleasant, and requires additives including large amounts of sugar, milk or cream to transform it into the tantalizing product on your grocer's shelf, having at least 50% of its calories in saturated fat which causes heart trouble.**

Chocolate contains theobromine (a harmful alkaloid causing abnormal gland growth, headaches, sleeplessness, depression, upset stomach, itching, and flushing of the skin), and tannin (thought to cause cancer of the digestive tract), and may contain high amounts of caffeine and theophylline. These poisons must be flushed out of the system by the kidneys and liver. Children who drink cocoa are more likely to have bedwetting problems. Chocolate has recently been incriminated in prostrate enlargement in men.

Harvesting of the cacao beans occurs in tropical countries where sanitation levels fall far below those in the US. Workers cut pods from the cacao tree and beans are piled in the farmer's yard and allowed to ferment for 3 to 8 days. This process is essential to developing the flavor.

During this process, children and adults walk over the piles; insects, rodents, small animals and other living things make their nests in the piles, and any type of contamination may occur during this primary processing stage of chocolate.

The U. S. Department of Health publishes a booklet entitled "The Food Defect Action Levels" and lists specifications of "current levels for natural or unavoidable defects in

food" for chocolate in the form of "insect, rodent, and other natural contaminants" allowed by the FDA. Tolerance levels for chocolate and chocolate liquor used in the manufacture of such products as Hershey's chocolate, are up to 120 insect fragments per cup (8 oz) or 2 rodent hairs per cup. That means the Hershey's chocolate bar you eat may contain one rodent hair and 16 insect parts, and yet carry the FDA's blessing.

For chocolate powder or pressed cakes used for baking, there must be no more than 75 insect parts in 3 tablespoons of powder. Up to 4% of the cacao beans may be infested by insects. Rat droppings or other animal excreta must not exceed 10 milligrams per pound!

At a meeting of the Society for Clinical Ecology, a member related this experience. In an endeavor to track down the source of allergenic substances, he visited a South American country to study the cacao bean. He began at the sight where it was grown and traced it all the way through the manufacturing process. **At one point he went down to the docks where the beans stood on open wharves awaiting shipment. On opening one of the crates he found it alive with cockroaches. He estimates that one-fourth of chocolate consists of dead, ground-up, melted-down cockroaches,** and that is one of the factors that makes it such a common allergen.

Carob powder from the locust pod is a healthful chocolate substitute. Gram for gram, carob contains three times the calcium that milk does. It is high in phosphorus and potassium, and contains Vitamin A, B1 (thiamine), B3 (niacin), and iron. Carob is rich in protein and high in natural carbohydrates. It is 60% lower in calories than chocolate, and is high in minerals, low in fat, and produces no known allergic reactions. Carob contains no caffeine or other stimulants, and requires no fermentation. Best of all, no insect fragments!

Carob chips are also readily available at most health food stores but may contain added sugar and/or tropical oil, so beware!

If you're like the rest of us, from time to time your sweet tooth declares "feed me!" and you will be happy to learn there are some delicious alternatives.

Goody Bar

In small bowl in microwave, melt

½ cup carob chips until smooth.

Stir in a spoonful chunky peanut butter.

Pour onto a sheet of plastic wrap and spread into candy bar shape.

You can add a few almonds.

(It's delicious, but don't eat it all yet!) Freeze and enjoy!

Carob Fudge

Warm in saucepan until well blended

¼ C. water

½ C. peanut butter

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½ C. dates

2 Tbs. honey

1 tsp. vanilla

Mix dry ingredients in separate bowl

½ C. carob powder

½ C. sesame seeds

½ C. sunflower seeds

1 C. coconut

Add warm ingredients. After well mixed, press onto a flat tray. Top with coconut.

Freeze, slice & enjoy.

Simply Divine Brownies

Whiz in blender:

1 C. water

¼ C. oil

¾ C. honey

1 tsp. salt

½ C. carob powder

1 C. flour

Optional: stir in (do not blend)

½ C. chopped nuts.

Pour into 8" pan coated with PAM. Bake at 300 for 40 minutes (or until knife inserted in center comes out clean).

Tropical Chewies

Cream together:

¼ C. margarine (or oil)

¼ C. orange juice concentrate

½ C. honey

½ tsp. vanilla

Slowly add:

½ C. crushed pineapple (drained)

1 C. flour

½ tsp. salt

¾ C. oats

½ C. wheat germ

½ C. chopped nuts

½ C. unsweetened coconut

¾ C. carob chips (or raisins)

Bake at 350 until brown.