

A Sophisticated Indulgence

Chocolate... those Aztecs didn't call it 'food of the gods' for nothing! They knew what they were talking about. Spot on. This special substance can be truly appreciated in many different, satisfying ways that can expand your horizons and transport you to a different plane.

For some reason chocolate appreciation is treated with amused tolerance, a bit of a joke; it is not given the same respect as art, music or literature appreciation, even though it really can be just as much of an art form.

Just as there is a world of difference between an alcoholic and a connoisseur of fine wine, so there is between a chocoholic – who rushes into the corner shop and buys a big bar for a quick fix –and the more sophisticated chocolate indulger. Some of us of course are both!

For a start, chocolate is gloriously sensual – and it can actually stimulate all five senses at once. Just imagine: first you can admire the creation of the often beautifully decorated products, feast your eyes on the different shapes and read the exotic names before anticipating what you might bite into. Then you can gently caress the textures with your fingertip as it hovers over the tantalising selection and you smell that divine aroma as the taste explosion melts in your mouth and lingers on your tongue with infinite deliciousness. As for the sense of hearing, well, there's the exciting rustle of the wrapper coming undone, and maybe, if you are not alone, the sounds of pleasure from another indulger. And then, if you are tuned in, you can almost hear the clamour from the chocolates themselves as they cry, 'Me! Me! Choose me! *I'm your favourite!*'

Deciding on favourites is one of the most difficult things about chocolate and involves a lot of trial and error. With so much to choose from it can sometimes take many years of concentrated repeated practice to really understand your taste buds. That's just something you have to live with....

But there is of course more. The level of chocolate indulgence can be raised by additional experimentation. For example, you can try running a bath and dropping in a chocolate bath fizzer; you can put on some relaxing music, dim the lights and use chocolate-
aroma candles instead. Sip chocolate liqueur as you luxuriate in the chocolate bubbles, sample a chocolate or two as you pamper your body with cocoa-based skin creams. Make the whole experience last and savour every second.

Don't waste time arguing about whether chocolate or sex is best, because the two pleasures can easily be combined. Edible chocolate body paste has been known to help here. Casanova is reputed to have used chocolate as an aphrodisiac and scenes sculpted in chocolate from the Kama Sutra are online to give further ideas should they be needed.

There is also a frivolous side to chocolate. For fun, you can collect fridge magnets proclaiming such truths as: 'There's nothing better than a good friend, except a good friend with chocolate' or 'I'd give up chocolate, but I'm no quitter.' You can try chocolate pasta or chocolate-flavoured carrots and see if they do anything for you. If you fall out with someone, you can have 'Am I forgiven?' inscribed on a chocolate tablet to ensure you definitely will be.

And there's something for all weathers: when it's warm you can enjoy chocolate ice-cream, when it's freezing cold a drink of hot chocolate is just the thing. And, if it's raining, you can stay dry under a chocolate-patterned umbrella.

Finally, for the ultimate treat, why not pamper yourself at a Chocolate Spa Day with chocolate bodywrap and pedicure?

There's no doubt – a sophisticated chocolate indulgence can certainly enhance your way of life.

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