

FOR THE CHOCOLATE LOVER

Let's face it – we have a love affair with chocolate. A universal gift and a ubiquitous landmark of romance, chocolate treats are an ingrained piece of dearly celebrated traditions. But really, is there ever a bad time for chocolate? We think not. And now more than ever, chocolate is on fire. Below are some of our favorite ways to indulge in the sweet treat.

ARTISAN DELIGHTS

With recent appearances on Oprah Winfrey Network's *Gayle King Show* and in *Every Day with Rachael Ray Magazine*, **Julia Baker Confections** is certainly a hot commodity in the world of chocolate. Browsing through the chocolatier's selections, it's easy to see why celebrity clients including Elton John, who gave Julia Baker chocolates for his holiday gifts, have been drawn to the signature recipes. Truffles and hand-cut artisan chocolates come in a variety of delicious flavors, and for the true connoisseur the striking 48-piece Red Hat Box combines truffles and various chocolate tastes inside a faux alligator hat box that opens to reveal a spiral staircase of chocolate-filled trays. JuliaBakerConfections.com



Also popular with the upper crust, artisan chocolates from **Chocolat Celeste** are desired favors at the New Year's Eve celebrations of The Mirage and Bellagio resorts in Las Vegas, and have been enjoyed at Meryl Streep's pre-Oscar party. Handcrafted using fresh ingredients from local farms and im-



ported European chocolate, and sourced from the best growers in the world, the process ensures delicacies of an extraordinary caliber. An exotic recent addition is the Pan Asian Collection, with taste combinations inspired by travels to the Far East sure to please the most sophisticated sweet taste buds. ChocolatCeleste.com

SURPRISING INGREDIENTS

With infusions of components from across the globe, **Xocolatti** has reimagined the luxury treat. For lovers of Italian desert, Xocolatti's Tiramisu Slate mimics the beloved cake with coffee-infused white chocolate sprinkled with a dark chocolate cocoa powder. And what culinary inspiration from Italy is complete without olive oil or basil? Xocolatti has that covered, too, in their Olive Oil Basil Truffle – a mixture blended with fresh basil and Sicilian olive oil and rolled in dark chocolate. Xocolatti.com



If you think ramen noodles and chocolate sounds like dinner for a college student, the interesting offerings from **Komforte**

Chockolates could change your perspective. A new spin on chocolate with a crunch, their bars eschew the traditional nuts or crisped rice for a more unexpected munch. Surprises inside the artisan quality, natural chocolate include the aforementioned ramen noodle, French toast, and tortilla, lime and sea salt. KomforteChockolates.com



Conscientiously decadent, vegan truffles from **Vosges Chocolate** bring together the simplicity of 100-percent natural chocolate with other organic ingredients for two unique and elegant treats. Delectable delights for vegans and non-vegans alike, both flavors are created with rich coconut



milk instead of cream, with the Coconut Vegan Truffle rolled in organic coconut flakes, and the Açai Vegan Truffle blended with Brazilian açai and rolled in pomegranate powder. A 12 piece box contains six of each type of truffle. VosgesChocolate.com

SWEET DRINKS

From a warm cup of cocoa on a chilly evening to fruity or tart potions perfect for al fresco dining, chocolate also saturates delicious drinks. Exported from Bolivia, products from **El Ceibo** are cultivated from the finest organic cacao in the Amazon basin. Dark rounds of their drinking chocolate combine with hot or cold milk for a rich, calming concoction. ElCeibo.org



Dubbed the "Chocolate Lover's Wine," wines from **Chocolate Shop** take the guesswork out of the perfect pairing, by combining the two in the same bottle. There's a variety of tastes for every palate, including a red wine infused with dark chocolate; and the Crème de Cocoa with fine wine, cream and smooth chocolate. ChocolateShopWine.com

