

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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### Chocolate by Any Other Name

We're into October, with the Halloween chocolate binge just around the corner. Right after that come the big holidays demanding lots of sweet gifts and desserts, then Valentine's Day in February. It's prime season for chocolate lovers. Glance down the candy aisle and marvel at the variety.

But look closely you might begin to wonder which ones really are chocolate and which ones are imposters. There's milk chocolate, the most common one. Then there's dark, bittersweet, semisweet and white chocolate. Go to the grocery and you'll find cocoa powder and unsweetened chocolate. Chocolate chips come in the same varieties, plus mint and occasionally raspberry chocolate flavors. What are their differences, and what can you substitute for what?

Let's start with the basics. Chocolate has two parts, the fat or butter and the solids. Grinding cacao beans produces a pasty mixture of the two called chocolate liquor. It's not alcoholic at all, but is very bitter. Unsweetened chocolate is simply this liquor, solidified into bars. Cocoa powder is made by pressing most of the butter out of the liquor and drying the powder. Both of these have a very strong chocolate flavor.

You can substitute cocoa powder for unsweetened chocolate by using 3 Tbsp of cocoa plus one Tbsp of butter or oil for each ounce of unsweetened chocolate. This will work okay but because cocoa butter, regular butter and oil taste and feel different, the results will not be exactly the same. Some cocoa powder is treated with alkali to neutralize the bitter acids. This makes the flavor more mellow, and gives the brown

cocoa a more reddish color. This is called Dutch or Dutched cocoa.

To make the other kinds of chocolate the liquor is mixed with some sugar, vanilla and soy lecithin, then warmed, stirred and put through rollers for hours. The lecithin helps the butter mix better with the other ingredients, and the heat and rolling help to evaporate some of the bitterness. What kind of chocolate comes from this depends on how much sugar and milk you put in, and how much butter you take out.

There is no legal difference between bittersweet and semisweet chocolate. They must be at least 35% liquor, but might have as much as 70%. Often bittersweet has more liquor, or real chocolate, than semisweet. Some have 30% sugar, others as much as 45%. You can substitute one for the other without a problem. You could substitute unsweetened chocolate for these, but the texture and flavor won't be nearly as nice. Use 2/3 ounce unsweetened chocolate plus 2 tsp sugar for each ounce.

Chocolate chips are bittersweet or semisweet chocolate with less butter. Cheap brands take out more cocoa butter and add vegetable oils instead. Some use mint or other flavors instead of vanilla. Chips work instead of bittersweet chocolate in simple recipes, but with less fat they don't work well in sauce or puddings. Three tablespoons of chips equal 1 ounce of bittersweet or semisweet chocolate.

Milk chocolate has powdered milk added to it. That dilutes the chocolate flavor and color. There must be at least 12% milk solids and 10% chocolate liquor. It's usually 50% sugar, and is better for eating than baking. Sweet dark chocolate is even sweeter, and without the milk. Add 1/3 cup of sugar to the recipe for each 4 ounces of bittersweet chocolate you substitute for sweet chocolate.

White chocolate doesn't have any chocolate solids, only butter. The rest is sugar, milk and vanilla. White 'chocolate' coating and some chips don't have any cocoa

butter, just palm oil. They're not chocolate at all.

Here's a quick and easy, relatively low calorie chocolate cake. It uses cocoa powder for extra flavor without the fat. Enjoy.

#### Make It in the Pan Chocolate Cake

3/4 C sugar	3 Tbsp cocoa powder
1 ½ C flour	1 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt	1 Tbsp vinegar
2 Tbsp oil	1 tsp orange extract
1 C water	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 9 inch nonstick cake pan with cooking spray. Sift sugar, flour, cocoa, soda and salt together into pan. Stir in liquids until blended. Bake 30 minutes or until tests done in center.

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