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REVEL IN CHOCOLATE AT HISTORIC INNS OF ROCKLAND CHOCOLATE MARCH

*Go Cuckoo for Cocoa with choco-sampling and celebration of American
Chocolate Week*

Rockland, ME – The Historic Inns of Rockland plan to celebrate American Chocolate Week with sweet gusto, and they've partnered with restaurants and spas throughout Rockland to bring a chocolate chomping weekend event. Rockland, Maine will roll out the cocoa carpet, March 7-9, 2008 (and March 13-15, 2009) for the **Annual Inn to Inn Chocolate March weekend**. This event features two days of sweet samplings and demonstrations throughout the Historic Inns of Rockland and the Rockland community including a wine and chocolate pairing and hot chocolate scrub massages. Explore all the reasons chocolate makes one healthy, wealthy and wise. Historic Inns of Rockland will indulge guests in this favorite American food while they kick off the annual American Chocolate Week (celebrated each year the second week in March) with all the pomp and sweetness it deserves.

It's a weekend of cocoa fun with a cake decorating demonstration at Captain Lindsey House, a demonstration on making molded chocolates at LimeRock Inn and then an entertaining with chocolate demonstration at Berry Manor Inn and a chocolate and wine pairing at The Wine Cellar, Rockland's premier wine store. You'll go to bed with visions of chocolate plums dancing in your heads topped off with chocolate lobsters on your pillow each night. The weekend gets started with an international chocolate tasting on Friday evening featuring chocolate from around the world from Safe Harbor Chocolates, and finishes with a fabulous "Blunch" on Sunday at Café Miranda featuring creative new

ways to enjoy chocolate ranging from chocolate pasta to chocolate drizzled French Toast.

With all the choco-energy of the events, why not stay the weekend? Historic Inns of Rockland have created the **Chocolate March Package** including:

- Two-night stay at Berry Manor Inn, LimeRock Inn or Captain Lindsey House on March 7 and 8, 2008 or March 13 and 14, 2009.
- Upon your arrival Friday evening, enjoy an international chocolate tasting reception featuring local wines and Safe Harbor Chocolates.
- Breakfast for two featuring chocolate entrees and accompaniments (recipes available)
- Historic Inns of Rockland goodie bag filled with chocolate samples from participating downtown businesses
- After a sumptuous dinner Saturday evening at a local restaurant, dessert is on us.
- Lively demonstrations where you'll learn how to decorate, mold and entertain with chocolate plus wine and chocolate pairings.
- Sunday "Blunch" with a decidedly (but not limited to) chocolate theme.

Never has this much chocolate been so affordable. The package starts at \$ 295 (+ tax) per couple in 2008 to \$555.00 (2009 rates are subject to change, please call). The package price varies from inn to inn. Add a third night for 25-percent off. Info:

www.HistoricInnsOfRockland.com, 877-ROC-INNS (877-762-4667)

Check www.HistoricInnsOfRockland.com for updates on package availability. There is no rain or snow date for this package; whether wind, snow or hail chocolate will be in abundance at Historic Inns of Rockland on Sunday.

For more information, to book a reservation for the Chocolate March Package or to purchase tickets by phone, call 1-877-ROC-INNS (877-762-4667) or visit www.HistoricInnsOfRockland.com for individual phone numbers and information on LimeRock Inn, Captain Lindsey House and Berry Manor Inn.

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For Chocolate Sidebar



The Love of Chocolate

By Marty Martindale

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**All I really need is love, but a little
chocolate
now and then doesn't hurt!**

*~ Lucy Van Pelt in Peanuts by Charles
M. Schulz*

Chocolate has been
linked to love for

centuries. The Aztec king, Montezuma, had no problem drinking 50 golden goblets a day of the early bitter stuff to ensure success whenever he frequently "got lucky." These days, healthwise, think in terms of bittersweet chocolate for a healthier heart.

How is chocolate good for your heart? Many researchers report chocolate can guard against strokes and heart attacks by thinning blood similar to the way aspirin does. "Now research shows that solid chocolate, however it is used, is an antioxidant, like red wine and blueberries. The darker the chocolate, the better," says Joe Vinson, professor of chemistry at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania. "Weight for weight, milk chocolate has twice as many antioxidants as blueberries, a potentially healthful fruit, while DARK chocolate has five times as much. Cocoa powder contains TWICE as much antioxidant effect as even the dark chocolate." He referred to white chocolate as "just fat and sugar."



Though chocolate had its beginnings in Mexico, it's pretty much a European thing these days and began appearing there in 1544 when a group of Mayans from Guatemala took gifts of chocolate to Spain. It was the Spaniards who insisted on sprucing up the chocolate with sugar and the New World's flavor, vanilla.

Early in each culture, it was a matter of cinnamon vs. and vanilla for flavoring. Because of this, bitter chocolate ended up in savory Mexican dishes, frequently as a mole sauce. For it, they blended bitter chocolate with chilies, onions, garlic, tomato, sesame seed, almonds, corn tortillas, raisins, clove, cinnamon, coriander, olive oil and chicken broth. The New World, however preferred its chocolate in the sweet zone, in candies, cakes, cookies and brownies. Their recipes generally contain melted chocolate or dry cocoa powder with butter, sugar, eggs, flour, a liquid, baking soda and vanilla.

Processing chocolate is not a piece of cake. First, the beans are removed from their pods and fermented, dried, roasted and cracked. This separates the nibs, which are 54% cocoa butter, from the shells. The nibs are ground to extract some of the cocoa butter, which is considered a natural vegetable fat. This leaves a thick, dark brown substance called "chocolate liquor." Next, the liquor goes through its first refining, then conched, a blending and kneading process where huge machines work the heated liquor and rid it of residual moisture and volatile acids. This process can take from 12 to 72

hours depending on the type and quality of the chocolate. If additional cocoa butter is extracted, the solid remains are ground into cocoa powder.

CHOCOLATE TYPE REFERENCE CHART:

UNSWEETENED CHOCOLATE: Pure chocolate liquor, the bitterest, used mostly for baking

BITTERSWEET CHOCOLATE: Slightly sweetened version of unsweetened chocolate

CAROB: Low-calorie chocolate substitute made of the mashed fruit of a Mediterranean pine tree.

COCOA POWDER: Powdered form of cocoa where nearly all fat is removed. Popular in low-fat cooking.

SEMISWEET CHOCOLATE: Often seen as "chocolate chips," they are semisweet chocolate blended with sugar, cocoa butter and flavorings.

WHITE CHOCOLATE: Contains no chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, added milk products, sugar

MILK CHOCOLATE: The sweetest, has milk powder, sugar, vanilla and cocoa butter added.

Many European countries are famed for their chocolate these days, not the least of which is Belgium. Located in the heart of Europe, over the years she has been invaded by the Spanish, Austrians, French, Dutch and English, and each has left its foodprints on Belgian cuisine. Authors Ruth Van Waerebeek and Maria Robbins, wrote in *Everybody Eats Well In Belgium Cookbook* state, "For us, chocolate is a devouring passion, a sweet addiction and our national pride. Undoubtedly, Belgian chocolate is some of the finest in the world, with a very distinctive flavor all its own. For the most part, we use cocoa beans from Africa, which are stronger and more assertive than the milder South American beans favored by American chocolatiers." Belgium boasts over 2100 chocolate shops, their "confiseries," which are places of refinement and elegance.

Waerebeek and Robbins also state in their Belgian cookbook: "...beginning at breakfast we indulge our passion with a thick, smooth chocolate paste that is smeared generously on a slice of bread. This chocolate paste, which is sometime mixed with nuts, is the Belgian equivalent of peanut butter." Best for you is chocolate darkest .

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