

Reports on chocolate date back several centuries. There are varying claims regarding its medicinal purposes, such as it having anti-inflammatory properties and its ability to reduce blood pressure. Chocolate comes from the cacao pod, which is grown on the Theobroma cacao tree. Translated, the Greek word, Theobroma, means “Food of the gods.” The Mayan and Aztek Indians believed it was a “Gift from the gods.” Nevertheless, it has been known as an aphrodisiac, but those claims have yet to be confirmed. It has been shared that Casanova and Montezuma both believed in its stimulating powers, and drank copious amounts of the then-liquid brew. Today, the global chocolate market exceeds \$1 billion, and Valentines Day is one of its busiest seasons. (Maybe Casanova was on to something!) *Recipe by Debbie Zimmerman*

Yummy Chocolate Bran Banana Bread

Ingredients:

2 cups All Bran Buds Cereal
3 tablespoons ground chia seeds
2 cups King Arthur Organic Whole Wheat Flour
¾ cup cocoa
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
4 medjool dates
2 cups almond milk
4 large ripe bananas
1/2 cup organic maple syrup
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Prepare 2 glass loaf pans or a 9” x 13” casserole dish with a little oil. Line the bottom and sides with parchment paper for easy.
2. In high-speed blender jar, crush All Bran Bud Cereal, leaving a quarter of the Buds whole. Pour into mixing bowl and add chia seeds. Sift together whole wheat flour, cocoa, baking powder and baking soda. Sift into bran mixture.
3. In the blender jar, add almond milk and dates. Process until dates are almost dissolved. Add bananas, maple syrup and vanilla extract. Blend well.
4. Pour banana milk mixture into flour; using mixer, blend well. The batter should be thick. If necessary, add more milk. Pour batter into prepared pans. Bake approximately 45 minutes or until done; do not overbake. Remove from oven and allow to cool. Lift the bread using the ends of the parchment paper.