

Chocolate – My Favorite Food Group

by Marilyn Reeves

“Food, glorious food!” go the lyrics to that joyful song in the musical *Oliver!*. To be sure, food is not only a necessity of life, it is one of life’s greatest pleasures. And how lucky we are to be living where we live and at this moment in time. The average American eats better quality, better tasting food than all the kings in all the lands who ever lived before us.

And such variety at our fingertips! Fresh meats and produce available year round. During the winter we enjoy avocados and other fruits flown in from places like Chile. During the summer, fresh home-grown strawberries, corn on the cob, and melons from Rocky Ford.

We may decide to fix a Chinese stir-fry on Monday, Italian spaghetti on Tuesday, and even Joan’s famous Mexican beef tacos on Wednesday. The choices are endless.

I personally enjoy a daily sampling of foods from all the various food groups – meats, poultry, dairy, fruits and vegetables. But my favorite food group is that derived from the cacao plant: chocolate.

Chocolate. Whoever came up with the idea of adding a touch of sugar to that bitter substance to create what is possibly the world’s most delectable delicacy gets my vote as King of the World! It’s been said that chocolate is even considered a substitute for sex. Well, if that’s the case, I’ll take vanilla! But as a food, there are few things more satisfying than chocolate.

Chocolate cake, chocolate brownies, chocolate chip cookies – you name it. If it’s chocolate, I love it. And chocolate contains high levels of anti-oxidants, so it’s not only delicious it’s actually good for you!

There is only one draw-back. Chocolate also contains a considerable number of calories. So, as much as I enjoy those aforementioned gastronomic delights, they are a rare treat, as I usually limit myself to a few M&M’s or a small handful of semi-sweet chocolate chips as a snack.

Speaking of chocolate chips, I have discovered a quick and easy way to make chocolate sauce (ice cream serves no purpose whatsoever without chocolate sauce!). I simply place a few chocolate chips in the bottom of a microwavable bowl, add a splash of soy milk, heat for 44 seconds (I like round numbers), and stir to the right consistency. Then I plop a dollop of vanilla ice cream on top, and *voila!* –instant chocolate sundae. Try it sometime – it’s absolutely delicious!

I can live without a lot of things, but please ... don’t take away my chocolate!