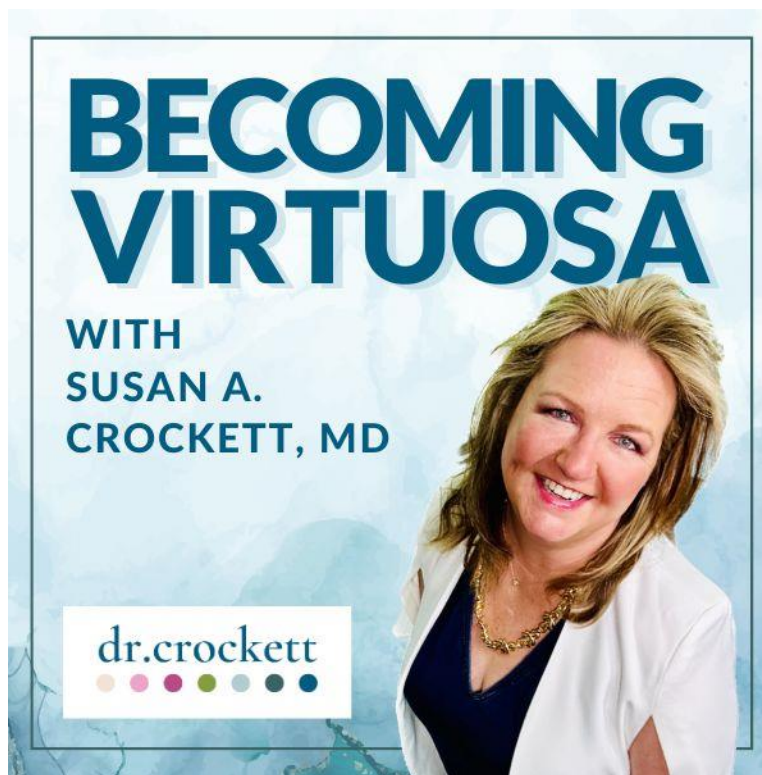


Ep #115: The Sweet Truth: How Chocolate Can Boost Your Health



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susan A. Crockett, MD

Ep #115: The Sweet Truth: How Chocolate Can Boost Your Health

So when we're eating chocolate, we want to get the least amount of carb high and the least amount of fat as possible. We want the bean and the darkness of the chocolate. So the higher the percentage of your dark chocolate, the less negative health benefits you're going to get from it.

Welcome to *Becoming Virtuosa*, the podcast that encourages you to become your best virtuosa self. Each week Dr. Susan Crockett goes where the scalpel can't reach, exploring conversations about how to be, heal, love, give, grow, pray, and attune. For the first time ever, she's bringing the personal one on one teaching that she shares with individual patients to you on this broader platform. A weekly source of inspiration and encouragement designed to empower you.

By evolving ourselves as individuals. We influence and transform the world around us. Please help me welcome board certified OB-GYN specializing in minimally invasive GYN surgery, internationally in the top 1% of all GYN robotic surgeons, a certified life coach, and US News top doctor, your host Susan A. Crockett, MD.

I'm a little nervous about today's episode, I've got to tell you. Do you notice anything different? Aside from being in the kitchen, which we're doing more often than I planned, I'm by myself today. That's right. I'm not doing an interview today. One of the things that I like to teach, and it's been going on for a long time, is that we need to try things new, try something new. So we have a little saying in our house. TSN, try something new every day.

If you go back to my original podcast, which by the way is called *Becoming Virtuosa*, becoming the best feminine version of yourself. It's on Apple and Google and Spotify and all the podcasts. Please find it there if you like listening to podcasts rather than seeing video. But if you go back to the very first one, it was called Let the Becoming Begin.

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It was a really terrifying episode. You can actually hear the process that I go through from not being a podcaster, not being in the public light to stepping up into the arena that transformation. That took, even though it was a baby step, it seemed like a huge, big step at the time to go from somebody who really wasn't published in this way at all to starting that podcast. That was back in 2020.

Fast forward to today, I am so grateful for all of you who have supported us, all of my patients who are encouraging me and saying yes, this is the kind of content we need to support us in our health journeys. I just love you so much.

This show though is another one of those big steps up because my friends and my mentors, my coaches have all been saying, look, Dr. Crockett, we know you can interview people. It's a lot of fun having guests. But we really tune in because we want to hear you. We want to hear you teach. We want to hear you do a show on your own.

I love teaching. I used to be a professor, an assistant professor for a residency program. I used to lecture every week. I do all kinds of speaking engagements and all kinds of lectures. But this looking at the camera and being the one that's here by myself, well actually, I'm not totally by myself because I snuck Ollie onto set. But me being the only one without an interview guest and just teaching is kind of new.

So today, I wanted to do that and let you know that we're evolving and transforming. We're also doing something else kind of fun today. I'm going to try it out. I'd like to know how you like it. We are doing taste comparisons. So today is the chocolate episode. We're doing chocolate comparisons.

If you look in front of me, you will see six different chocolates that are single sourced from six different regions of the world. They're all very close to

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70%. We're going to talk about the health benefits of that. We're also going to talk about the differences and trying something new. So a lot of you know that when we do the show, I've talked about it many times. When I have guests on, we start by inviting them into the kitchen, and I actually cook for them.

Most of the time I'm trying something new, I'm trying new recipes. I'm trying new foods that I haven't tried before. Often we're doing taste comparisons of things that I would normally walk by in the grocery store and say I wonder what that tastes like, but I'm always grabbing my same things off the shelf.

So today I'm going to show you this process of trying different things. I'm going to encourage you to do the same thing. So we're going to try these different chocolates. If you can see, they're all sourced from different countries.

What we want to do is figure out even though they're all from the same cacao plant, and they're all basically made with sugar added to the cacao bean, we want to see what the differences of the flavors are. Then maybe we'll use them in different ways in our cooking. We're going to talk about the benefits of this chocolate. Then we're also going to talk about how we pair it along with other flavors.

So I have one from the Dominican Republic, one from Brazil, one from Tanzania, one from Vietnam, one from Peru, and one from India. So I think this is super interesting because I, like a lot of you, also like other things that are sourced from different parts of the world. Coffee, hello. If you've ever been to a Starbucks, and hello who hasn't, and you've tried their different coffees that you realize that there are a lot of different flavors from what is a coffee bean from all different parts of the world.

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Some of that is because of climate. Some of it is because of the mineral content of the dirt, the richness of the soils, the nutrients. Some of it, I believe, is from the love of the farmers that put their heart and soul into what they're doing.

My point is when we try things from across the world or from different places, they have very different flavors. Wine is another example. We talk about wine in terms of harvests and grapes and all of that. Some of you may not know, but I was an oboist when I was young. I was a musician before I was a surgeon.

The oboe is the most temperamental instrument because we have to play off of what is called a double reed. Those double reeds are handmade out of bamboo. Bamboo is another product that is very different from source to source. The bamboo quality and the sound that would come out of our reed varied greatly from where the reed came from, but also the water content of the area when that bamboo was grown.

So today, we're going to kind of apply those principles of trying different things from different places to our chocolate. Before I try them, and I'm going to get to that in a second. Gosh, I can't wait. I wanted to talk with you a little bit about the health benefits of chocolate.

Chocolate, the bean itself and making it into chocolate as I mentioned before, is basically the same the world over. The difference in the percentages of the chocolate has to do with how much or how dense the chocolate is compared to the sugar.

So when we're eating chocolate, we want to get the least amount of carb high and the least amount of fat as possible. We want the bean and the darkness of the chocolate. So the higher the percentage of your dark chocolate, the less negative health benefits you're going to get from it.

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Also the more percentage of chocolate that you'd have, like a 96% or so, the more bitter it's going to be. So I prefer kind of a 70% one. When we talk about health benefits in our office, we talk about buying a bar that 70% or greater.

In a bar, that's 100 grams, and these are a little smaller than that. These are 64 gram ones that I got from my local grocery store, Central Market, H-E-B. Yeah, love them. These are 64 grams. But in 100 grams of dark chocolate that's 70%, you basically get 11 grams of fiber. Fiber, hello. We all need that for our gut. It also has a healthy amount of iron, magnesium, copper, manganese, potassium, zinc, selenium, and phosphorus. Who knew all that was in the chocolate?

There're also healthy fats. The fats that are found in chocolate naturally are not the kind that clog your arteries. In fact, chocolate also has a lot of antioxidants and flavonoids that are helpful for our blood pressure. Then they increase our blood flow, and they help stimulate our brain activity.

Chocolate also has caffeine in it and theobromine. Those are two things that keep us awake. They don't have nearly as much as a cup of coffee, but a little chocolate bar, especially dark chocolate in the afternoon, just to get a little pick me up. If you don't want to hit a heavy hit of a caffeine drink or a carbonated soda type drink, this has a much better health benefit for you.

Chocolate is really good for our skin. It can help protect our skin against sun damage. In addition to those benefits, dark chocolate also increases our nitric oxide levels in our bloodstream, which is super cool because it helps dilate our blood vessels and can lower our blood pressure. The other thing that is really helpful for us, it has to do with our lipid panel.

So dark chocolate is one of those whole food plant based products that can increase your HDL, it also decreases the bad effects of LDL. So if you want

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to increase your HDL, you could drink red wine, which is fun, but this is a whole lot better for your brain. So eat your dark chocolate for your HDL and decrease the bad effects of your LDL at the same time.

It's also really good for our skin. We think there may be some health benefits that protect our skin against the sun. It's really good for brain cognitive function. There have been some studies in older patients with cognitive decline that suggests that eating dark chocolate over 70% is really helpful. Cool.

So dark chocolate is so much fun for us. You know what else is fun? It's fun to pair it with all kinds of other foods. So I want to show you a little bit about what we've done to pair. I have some things out here that we've laid out. It's great to pair with oranges. We've got little mini chocolates. Peppermint and chocolate is really great together. I've got a little pomegranate juice here. A little chocolate with pomegranate juice is delicious. There are some fresh pomegranates there.

Earlier today with Sam we made the episode with the healthy holiday peppermint bark, which has got a greater than 70% Chocolate as the base. You can see it here. So tune into that episode. That's airing right before Christmas. So I'm going to try the chocolates. We're going to talk about the different flavors.

Let's see. Let's start with the Dominican Republic one. So these have slightly different color. I don't know if you can tell, but like here's the Dominican one, Dominican Republic, and here's the Vietnam one. It's considerably lighter. I wonder if there'll be a flavor difference because this one is 69%. This one 70%. So we're going to start with this one.

This has a really deep bittersweet flavor. It's got a little tang at the end of it. So if you wanted something that had a little punch in it, especially if you want to pair it with a coffee like a Guatemalan coffee or a Central American

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coffee, this would be really great. A Kenyan coffee would be really good with it.

Let's try the Vietnam one. Let's see. This has a little bit more aromatic flavor. It's not exactly sweeter. It still has a nice dark chocolate taste to it. But it has almost a floral taste that came through in the beginning of it. I think this one I would rather pair with a fruit. Hmm, it's got just a little bit of tang at the end of it. That's interesting.

Okay, let's try the India one. This one's from India. They didn't tell me which part of India. This is also a 70%. Wow. Okay, this one is really smooth, almost aromatic. It has kind of a sweeter spicy scent to it or taste to it. You know scent and taste are so close. So this one doesn't taste like sugar to me, but it tastes more like rich, earthy spices is really. Call it like almost a cinnamon flavor to it. Maybe a little raspberry type of flavor. Maybe almond? That one's really good. I really liked the Indian one.

Let's try Brazil. Brazil is going to be interesting because I really like Brazilian coffee. Okay, if I was to pick up a bar of a commercial dark chocolate in the grocery store like a Ghirardelli or one of those higher quality cooking chocolates, I think it would taste like this Brazilian. This is also one that I would pair with a with a coffee or chocolate cake. This would be really great as a chocolate cake with a chocolate cake icing. Oh my gosh. That's not whole food plant based you guys. Where did my mind go there? This I could just sit and eat all day. That's really yummy by itself.

We've got one from Tanzania. This one's slightly reddish. This one's much milder, much more mild. Which is interesting because it's the strongest percentage of chocolate that I have today. This one's a 72% chocolate. Very smooth, very mild. Not a lot of tannin or bitterness in it. Really sweet.

You know what? By the way, you don't have to do six of everything. Goodness, you could just try three. Like want to save your pocketbook and

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just try three of something. The point is to try to experiment and try new things and then figure out how that might influence what you do with your cooking. You might find something delicious that you didn't know you're missing.

I'm saving was supposed to be the best for last because the guy at the grocery store said the Peruvian one was his favorite. So I'm going to try a bite of the Peruvian. Let's see. All right, it's similar to the Tanzanian in that is very smooth and rich and sweet. This one's really sweet. Still 70%. Yeah, that one's going. Gone. So good.

So I hope you liked this episode on chocolate, one of my favorite subjects. Stay tuned. For our next comparison test, we're going to do salts. If you've never tried the different flavors of salts in your grocery store, amazing. Like you would not believe the difference between a pink Himalayan salt and the regular salt that we get out of the Morton shaker versus this one's like Celtic sea salt. It's a little moist. That's the next one that we're going to do.

Until then, I hope you have a happy holidays and enjoy your family. I hope you enjoy our show. I hope you go to your grocery store and try new things as you're walking down the aisle. If you liked this show, please hit the like button and subscribe and share with your friends. I'll see you next time. I'll see you next week. Thanks for your support. Love you guys.

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