

There are Herbs in My Chocolate Media Kit Amber and Jake Royer

Sweet and Savory Recipes that Combine Chocolate and Culinary Herbs



Create complex flavors by pairing chocolate and culinary herbs!



Savory AND Sweet Chocolate

Chocolate. It's not just for dessert. Using chocolate to round out flavor profiles is an easy, creative way to add unexpected flair to any part of your menu. From aperitifs, to soups, to entrees to dessert, there's a place for chocolate. Chocolate doesn't have to be sweet. Consider ways to incorporate chocolate into the savory side of things:

- Cocoa powder adds an earthiness to sauces and pairs beautifully with mushrooms.
- Dark chocolate can fill in the same flavor notes as red wine in stews and chili.
- Cocoa butter can add a delicate perfume to pesto and salad dressings, and take the place of butter in making bruschetta and toast.
- Cocoa nibs can take the place of nuts (especially for individuals who are allergic to nuts) to add an unexpected crunch to salads and baked goods.

Chocolate can handle bold flavors without getting lost. It is not surprising that chocolate is traditionally paired with chilis to make mole sauces, and with rich ingredients, such as in coq au vin, to ground them. In this book, we've riffed on traditional uses of savory chocolate in different part of the global kitchen – and come up with some unconventional takes, such as substituting the sugar in Thai peanut sauce with white chocolate.

Sometimes, the most unexpected flavor elements can be brought together simply with chocolate. One of the best cheese courses I've ever had combined an apricot pate, dark chocolate and goat cheese. There's a similar sweet-savory flavor profile here, in the Cheesy Pear and Chocolate Tortilini.

If course, There Are Herbs in My Chocolate also includes spectacular desserts featuring chocolate's sweet side.



Keep it FRESH!

You can take your flavor profile game up another level by adding culinary herbs to the equation. Even in simple recipes– hot chocolate, for example – adding different herbs completely changes the experience. Our Lavender and Roses Hot Chocolate brings a floral sweetness to a thick drinking chocolate, while the Thyme and Orange Hot Chocolate has a fresher, lighter feel to it.

Exploring new culinary herbs can take you to different places in the global kitchen, where you can learn how flavors are used in different parts of the world. It can also take you into the past, where you can learn the traditions behind the ways food is made. For instance, in this book, you will find Rose and Pistachio Chocolate Bark, which is inspired by common dessert flavorings in India. And you will learn that certain herbal liqueurs were invented in a quest to find the elixir of life.

Trying new things in the kitchen can inspire you to cook at home more, maybe grow your own herbs, and start inventing your own recipes, using the instincts for flavor developed by trying different combinations, such as those in the book.

Dark/unsweetened chocolate and culinary herbs are both healthy ingredients, which can be incorporated into a balanced lifestyle that includes both moderate choices and indulgences. You will find both types of recipes in this book.

Part cookbook, part introduction to the history of herbs and their relation to global flavors, we hope *There are Herbs in My Chocolate* inspires you to your own culinary adventures.

Blurb:

The author of the Chocoverse science fiction series brings you an out-of-this world delicious cookbook.

Chocolate Gingerbread.

Chicken Satay with White Chocolate Peanut Sauce.

Dark Chocolate Mushroom Arancini.

Maybe you didn't realize these things were missing from your life, but sampling them might change the way you think about chocolate.

Chocolate can be earthy, bitter, nutty, subtle or sweet, and *There are Herbs in My Chocolate* uses everything from cocoa butter and white chocolate to chocolate infused balsamic vinegar to explore the range of tastes that can come from the seeds of a single tree.

The herbs involved may be fresh from the garden, dried, or infused into herbal liqueurs.

Learn how to work with chocolate. Make herbal syrups, sauces, pastes and candied herbs. Infuse herbs into ice cream, confections, breads and pastries.

These meticulously tested recipes, featuring detailed full-color photographs, will take you on global culinary adventures. This cookbook updates and fuses traditional ingredient combinations.

Book Trailer: <https://youtu.be/AJllzxlOdFM>

Book Details

There are Herbs in My Chocolate – April 11, 2019, Golden Tip Press, \$22.50.
Available as paperback and e-book, in the US.

Hashtags

#herbsinmychocolate #cookingwithchocolate #culinaryherbs #globalflavors #kitcheninspired #flavorprofiles #cookbook #sweetandsavory #chocolatefordinner #chocolatelove #foodie #culinarytechnique #cookingathome #wantmorechocolate #herbalcooking #yum #delicious #nourishment #mindfuleating #slowfood #homemade #keepitfresh #foodhistory



Amber's Bio:

Amber Royer is a science fiction author whose work often veers into culinary territory. The protagonist of her Chocoverse series is a culinary arts student in a world where chocolate is the galaxy's most sought-after delicacy. Royer maintains an author Instagram feed that focuses on tea, coffee, chocolate, and writing prompts.

She has taught creative writing and nonfiction writing classes at UT Arlington for over a decade. One of her more popular classes is Writing Your Own Cookbook: From Heirloom to Fundraiser. She has self-published two cookbooks (including the original edition of this one) and had a column at Dave's Garden for several years.

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Jake's Bio:

Jake Royer, civil engineering designer by day, urban gardener by weekend, began his love of chocolate at an early age. Although his taste for fine chocolate has been developed by sampling single-source chocolates at the Dallas Chocolate Festival and other spectacular chocolate creations he has encountered along the way, he still

harbors a not-so-secret love of Oreos. He has always been fascinated by how things work and loves to take food back a step from the finished product to the raw materials. Why buy yogurt (or herbal syrup or glaze fruit) when you can make it even better? He has been gardening for over 20 years and has a semi-regular blog. His current project involved growing cacao trees in an office environment.

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Presentation Topics:

The Royers are both experienced educators and presenters.

Amber has lectured about chocolate and cooking aboard Royal Caribbean Cruise Ships, at herb festivals and in the classroom. She has taught cupcake camps for kids, cooking classes for UT Arlington Continuing Education, and once sold Pampered Chef Cookware. Consider her if you need someone to speak on:



Writing about Food

The History of Chocolate

How Chocolate is Grown and Processed

Chocolate Tastings

How Real Chocolate Influenced the Chocoverse

Jake has taught robotics for kids, and done demos for herb societies.

Consider him if you need someone to speak on:

Civil Engineering and Your Garden

Growing Cacao Trees

Cooking With Chocolate



They also do joint presentations including:

Chocoverse reading and planting a cacao tree.

Garden Journaling and Seed Saving.

Building a Garden Blog

Want a Sample?

Contact the Royers for a review copy.

You peruse the recipes list of There are Herbs in my Chocolate on Amazon.

<https://www.amazon.com/There-Are-Herbs-My-Chocolate/dp/0991408330/>

Features Angle

There are a lot of cookbooks based off of fictional stories, be they science fiction (The Dragonlovers Guide to Pern), fantasy (An Unexpected Cookbook: The Official Guide to Hobbit Cookery), or mystery (The Cat Who Cookbook). But the other way around isn't so common.

Before The Chocoverse series by Amber Royer, there was a little pamphlet, There Are Herbs in My Chocolate. It was produced to go along with an herbal presentation where chocolate and herbs were paired to make recipes that riffed on traditional technique and flavors to create a tiny cookbook with a unique twist. Shortly after this, with all the research that had gone into creating a choco-cook-guide, Amber found herself looking at NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) approaching without time to do much planning – and she decided to write a comic set piece where the story's main McGuffin was a cacao pod (the football-shaped fruit that chocolate is made from). Amber calls the Chocoverse a “kitchen sink” project. She started by making a list of all the things that she enjoys in books and TV shows – space opera, soap opera, cooking shows, mysteries, love stories, found family, unexpected nobility, flawed heroes, etc. – and built from there.

During the writing, Jake served as a sounding board for all the wackiness, providing some of the best jokes in the book, and was Amber's main alpha reader. When they go to events, he's porter, cheerleader, tech help, and the Chocoverse's biggest fan. When she decided to have a plant disease threaten the existence of cacao trees – and hence the universe's supply of chocolate – in the third book, the Royers decided to start growing their own cacao trees indoors, to get a feel for how that works.

After her series came out, Amber kept being asked when she was going to bring her little cookbook back. Jake thought it was a great idea to add to the project, now that they had learned so much more about chocolate. So now you have the new expanded version of There Are Herbs in My Chocolate, which brings things full circle.

Choco Tips Sheet

--The Royers live in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Texas is a multicultural food haven, with specialty grocery stores friendly to most parts of the global kitchen. Still, areas near the DFW area are rural enough for wild harvesting cactus paddles, and Fort Worth hosts the Botanical Research Institute of Texas. These influences both come into play in *There Are Herbs in My Chocolate*. This cookbook is for adventurous cooks wanting to try something new, and for chocolate lovers looking to expand their horizons.

-- *There are Herbs in My Chocolate* is intended for the intermediate to advanced level cook (as some recipes require tempering chocolate or laminating dough), though many of the recipes are easy enough for a beginning cook to master. After all, anyone can steep herbs to make a killer hot chocolate, or whip up a batch of mint chocolate chip cookies.

-- The Royers have partnered with DallasChocolate.org on several events, and have come to know members of the Dallas Craft Chocolate Community – as well as bean-to-bar makers from various parts of the United States and Mexico. They have toured cacao plantations and chocolate processing facilities. Their takeaway: chocolate has more depth of flavor, variation of flavor and flexibility than many people realize. Craft chocolate is a growing food movement, and getting people interested in cooking with chocolate in ways that go beyond baked goods can only lead to more interest in small batch production and high-quality beans.

-- Amber Royer is a former librarian. She became interested in herbs and gardening from co-workers at the University of Texas at Arlington library, as well as the influence from her mother-in-law. This became one of her special research areas. She put together the research portion of the book, which includes headers for each of the recipes.

-- Jake Royer is a CAD designer, who came by his love of gardening honestly – from his grandfather and mom. He has the “engineering type’s” need to see how things work, so he likes to make elements from scratch. This led to the Royers processing bean to bar chocolate in their kitchen. And then pod to bar. And now, they are growing cacao trees indoors, in an attempt to understand the limits and possibilities of their Office Plant Cacao Project.

-- The Royers find they are happier when they cook at home. As you discover what flavors you really love, and a little bit about where they came from, you can become more personally involved in what you choose to eat. And you can create unique meals for yourself, for family, and for friends.

Sample Q&A:

Q. Are you guys trained chefs?

A – We're pretty much self taught. We love to travel, and to re-create food we've tried at restaurants. Though some of the best food we've ever had has been at street fairs, markets and food trucks. We're both addicted to competition-style cooking shows and find ourselves riffing on recipes we've seen the contestants try – or trying to predict what they will make, given the flavor profiles they're working with.

J -- And sometimes not just recreate but improve on a recipe we've had. No recipe is perfect for everyone and making a recipe your own is all about what flavors you personally enjoy.

Q. How did this cookbook come about?

A – There are Herbs in My Chocolate started as a project for the Fort Worth Herb Society. We were asked to do a demo that would be unlike anything they had presented at previous Herb Festivals, and we decided to combine two of our favorite things. After my Chocoverse sci-fi novels came out, people started asking when we would bring back the chocolate cookbook (which was a much smaller booklet, with minimal illustrations). So we completely re-envisioned the book, providing a full color photograph for each recipe. Jake took most of the photographs.

J -- Everything in this book has been tested, photographed, and eaten. We had friends over to help with the testing so we could make sure the food was up to other people's taste as well.

Q. How can you incorporate chocolate into a healthy lifestyle?

Both Dark/Unsweetened Chocolate and Culinary Herbs are both low carbohydrate foods. Recent studies have shown that people who eat chocolate at least once a week perform significantly better cognitively. This may have to do with cocoa flavanols (which are present in cocoa nibs, a healthy way to get the chocolate without the sugar), which increase blood flow to the brain. Studies have suggested these flavanols can reduce age-related cognitive dysfunction. Chocolate is also a great source of antioxidants, and research has suggested it may be helpful in combating other health issues. Where you run into trouble is when the chocolate is combined with large amounts of sugar. So incorporate chocolate in savory dishes, or eat dark chocolate without adding additional sweeteners most of the time you want a chocolate experience. Save the cookies, cakes and ice cream for treat days.

Q. How do you test recipes?

A -- We make them in our kitchen. Most of the time, we have a base technique (such as steeping herbs in liquid) that we're building on, and most of the time the recipes taste like what we anticipated. If not, we tweak the recipe and try again. There was only one recipe idea – for a rosemary chocolate cheese loaf – that we never could get to work. We finally re-envisioned the flavor profile to come up with the Rosemary honey Butter Roll with Dark Chocolate.

J -- Often one of us reads out the recipe while the other one puts it together. This makes sure the recipe makes sense to someone else. Otherwise you can easily read instructions and know what you meant without it ever actually being written down.

Q. What are your favorite dishes to cook?

A – I like to try new things, so often, we're experimenting in the kitchen. But there are a few recipes featured in this book that we keep coming back to. The Chocolate Chili is easy to make for a week-night dinner. And the peanut sauce from the Grilled Chicken Satay with Thai-Style White Chocolate Peanut Sauce goes well with chicken and noodles, or beef skewers as well. We both love to make home-made bread, and I love how understated the chocolate notes are in the sourdough we paired with one of the brightest possible herb sauces in the Grilled Sourdough with Chimichurri Dipping Sauce.

Q. How is cooking like writing?

A – In writing you're taking a bunch of characters and thoughts and ideas and forming them into a cohesive structure. It's a process, and you can't rush it. Sometimes, you have to step away from it and wait for your subconscious to work out a thorny problem involving a plot hole, or something too predictable. It's similar to stepping back and letting a yeast dough have time to rise. Sometimes you have to keep working through it, which is more like constantly stirring caramelizing onions until they transform. Both are creative activities that are quite cathartic.

Q. What is your favorite type of chocolate?

A – FREE CHOCOLATE! Just kidding. That's the title of my first sci-fi novel. I like chocolate bark, because it looks a bit like impressionist art, and can have other ingredients layered on top in ways that look quite attractive.

J -- I like a nice single source dark chocolate. Something with a bit of tannin still in it for those leathery notes and possibly some fruity notes as well. Cacao from Madagascar usually has some of these notes in it.

Q. What are some of the most interesting experiences you've had because of your interest in craft chocolate?

A – I was invited to speak at the Dallas Chocolate Festival in 2018. And we've made it a point to visit craft chocolate shops/independent chocolatiers in the areas we visit. We've gotten to sample some AMAZING chocolate desserts and confections. But more than that, we've gotten to talk to people eager to share their passions with someone who understands the work that went into making those tiny mouthfuls.

J – Definitely the chance to grow some of these lovely trees. I've always liked growing different plants and this is one that I can grow indoors in my office where I can see it. Several people are now following the progress of my trees either on my blog or amber's Instagram feed.

Q. How do you work together as collaborators?

A – I'm the researcher and planner. Jake and I test things together, both taste and tweak the recipes, and then come up with a version that we can both agree is delicious. Jake does most of the photographs and handles the layout issues.

J -- And at times we don't agree on a recipe, like some of the drinks are more my taste or her taste. At the end though we agree on what goes into the book for whatever reason.

Q. Say I'm planning a chocolate themed party. What would be a full menu?

A – That would be a great way to explore the different sides of chocolate. I'd suggest:

Chili-Spiced Hot Chocolate (bitter)

Mushroom Arancini (earthy)

Fruit and Cocoa Stuffed Pork Loin (nutty)

Grilled Vegetables with Cocoa Butter Pesto (subtle)

Rosemary Honey Butter Roll with Dark Chocolate (fruity)

Jasmine Liqueur Chocoflan (sweet)