

You Deserve The Best . . . Chocolate valentine!



Whether you'd like to gift some sweets or simply want to treat yourself, we've uncovered such unique candies, you'll savor them *almost* as much as the time you spend with loved ones!

If you want . . .

CUTE YET CHIC CARAMELS:

Whimsical Candy La-Dee-Dahs

The unofficial "candy capital" of the world right now? "Chicago," declares candy expert Beth Kimmerle (BethKimmerle.com) without hesitation. "It's churning out some really exciting confections, like these cute swirls made of white chocolate nougat and sea-salt caramel; they're gourmet-ified caramels that make a great gift for Valentine's Day!"

▶ \$6.49 for 3 at WhimsicalCandy.com



THOUGHTFUL BONBONS:

Intentional Chocolate Raspberry Hearts

These hearts, made with Hawaiian chocolate, give new meaning to the adage "It's the thought that counts," promises Sera Gencarelli (TheCandyEnthusiast.com). "They're blessed by monks! Not only are they bursting with raspberries, which complement the dark chocolate perfectly, they're also literally infused with good feelings. Plus, 50% of the profits go to charity."

▶ \$19.95 for 6 at IntentionalChocolate.com



PERSONALIZED SENTIMENTS:

Chocri Customized Chocolate Bars

Pastry chef Jessica Petersen (PieOfTheTiger.com) was destined to love chocolate: "I was born on Valentine's Day," she smiles. Another act of the foodie fates? "Getting introduced to these bars, which you completely personalize, right down to the message! You pick your base—white, milk or dark chocolate—then choose up to six toppings."

▶ \$6-\$15 at CreateMyChocolate.com



CREAMY DECADENCE:

Rogers' Chocolates Victoria Creams

"These creams are amazing," says self-described "chocolate devourer" Alyssa Cartlidge (BlogChocolate.com). "Their smooth fondant center is enrobed in rich bittersweet chocolate, and they come in so many flavors, from maple to almond brittle." A bonus? "You can customize your box—it's good to be able to pick and choose!"

▶ \$17.99 for 17 at RogersChocolates.com



A-Z VARIETY FOR GOURMANDS:

Vosges Mini Exotic Candy Bar Library

"Vosges is my favorite chocolatier," declares chocolate reviewer Julie Anderson (BoogaJ.com). "And this Mini Exotic Candy Bar Library is a great value because all nine flavors are truly gourmet, from the spicy Red Fire Bar to the buttery Bapchi's Toffee Bar. One of my favorites is the Creole, made with coffee, cocoa nibs and bittersweet chocolate—so rich!"

▶ \$25 at VosgesChocolate.com



Photos: Media Bakery; Tara LeMaistre/HBB (3); courtesy of vendors (2).

Smart Switches!

Score Jessica Alba's spotted scarf!

Instead of this

The actress is on-trend in her \$80 Tolani leopard-print scarf.

TRY THIS

Our look-alike is the perfect winter-to-spring accessory—and just \$35 at ShopHarmonyLane.com!



Instead of this



TRY THIS



Keep your arms dry!

Instead of letting water and soap get on your sleeves while you clean, slip on foam cuffs. They stop water from running down your arms! (\$7.99 at OnTheCuff.net.)

Instead of this



TRY THIS



Warm up winter beverages!

Instead of pouring hot cider or cocoa into a cold mug, heat a stoneware mug in a 200°F oven for two minutes to keep your drink toasty!

Instead of this



TRY THIS



Serve breakfast for dessert!

No time to whip up a traditional dessert? Delight guests with trendy chocolate waffles topped with ice cream! One to try: Julian's Recipe waffles, about \$4.50.

Instead of this



TRY THIS



Pick a skinnier pasta dish!

Skip spaghetti and meatballs (900 to 1,000 calories) and go for cheese ravioli in marinara. Six pieces with sauce has just 270 calories!