

Ten Chocolate Companies Offer Gifts for Dairy-Free and Vegan Valentines

Back in the day when Hershey's ruled the roost, the concept of pure, luxurious dark chocolate was reserved for adventurous connoisseurs. But today, dozens of fine chocolatiers are using the Internet and those ever-expanding natural food stores to offer their delicious wares to the public at large. In fact, with such great response they have expanded their pure, dairy-free offerings (because as you know, the best chocolate has no need for pesky milk fillers) to include exotic bars, truffles, and boxed chocolates. So where can you find these Valentine's Day worthy sweets? Follow me …

Chocolates We Have Taste-Tested and Approved:

Grocer's Daughter Chocolates ~ Last year this chocolatier introduced their first vegan chocolates: Apricot Chardonnay Truffles, Cocoa Pulp Hearts, and Almond Bon Bons. Lets just say … we liked them … and so did many other customers. Due to a tremendous response, Grocer's Daughter has expanded their product line to include The Valentine Vegan Heart Box. Packed with 13 non-dairy pieces, this heart shaped box includes the chocolates noted above, in addition to their Sunflower Bon Bons and Chocolate Dipped Organic Figs. For those Valentine recipients with a hearty appetite, we can't recommend the Wally Bar (also vegan) enough.

Sjaak's Organic Chocolates ~ Sure, organic is impressive in its own right, but what if the chocolates were also fair trade and vegan? What if you could choose from flavored bars, boxed chocolates, truffles, and bites all with the no dairy label? You aren't dreaming, Sjaak's offers all of this, and I can confirm that their products are delicious. Their vegan boxed assortments even include chewy caramels and toffees, an experience not to be missed.

Lagusta's Luscious Truffles ~ It may be too late to order these limited production vegan truffles in time for the big day, but your love will be eternally grateful if some boxes of these incredible truffles land on the doorstep, even a month too late. Amazingly, the price doesn't match the quality, as these are incredible truffles for a wonderfully affordable price. Thus far we have tasted the Wild Box and the Fruity Box, and our taste buds were dazzled with decadence. The Sea Salt truffle was a surprise hit with everyone.

Booja Booja Organic Truffles ~ Don't ask me how we got our hands on the Champagne Truffles from Booja Booja, but we did, and they were an addictive powerhouse of champagne intensity. Those in the UK will relish in the easy access to the entire Booja Booja line directly from their website. For those of us stateside, the lovely people at Vegan Essentials have imported these treasures for sharing.

Food Allergy-Friendly and Kid-Friendly Offerings:

Amanda's Own Confections ~ These kid-friendly chocolates are perfect for classroom sharing and sensitive little taste buds. Their treats are dairy-free, tree nut-free, peanut-free, egg-free and gluten-free, and come in a variety of shapes and packages to suit every holiday, including Valentine's Day.

Chocolate Emporium ~ From kids to adults, they have the chocolate spectrum covered at this kosher company. Another all-occasion winner, it is easy to find something among the wide selection, and the staff seems fairly knowledgeable about the needs of special diets.

Still to Test, but we Hear Good Things:

Lake Champlain Chocolates ~ The elegance and availability of these chocolates is hard to pass up. While you may spot them in stores, you can also order any of their vegan offerings with ease online.

Eclipse Chocolat ~ They have delivered some very fine dark chocolate bars for years, but the word on the street is that this confectioner has just come out with vegan Salted Coconut Milk Caramels and Double Coconut Milk Caramels. We didn't spot these in their online store as of yet, but a quick phone call to their shop will likely yield an order.

Rose City Chocolatier ~ Finding dairy-free and vegan selections from this chocolatier is a snap, just one click away from their front page. It is hard not to get excited when sneaking a peak at the various sizes of Vegan Valentine Boxes, Cherry Cordials, Peanut Butter Truffles, and Mints.

Sweet Earth Organic Chocolates ~ Another fair trade manufacturer with wonderful vegan options. We were drooling over the Chai Chocolates and curious as to the mix within the Vegan Valentine Box.

Bonus - Vegan Gift Baskets:

Vegan Divine ~ Should one particular treat not capture your eye, this new gift basket company may be just the thing. Vegan Divine specializes exclusively in vegan and vegetarian gifts, and as you may have guessed, they do have several wonderful options for Valentine's Day.

Special Note: Chocolate is a sensitive issue when it comes to food allergies. Though many chocolates may be dairy-free and vegan in terms of ingredients, manufacturing on shared equipment with milk chocolate could pose risks for cross-contamination. If this is a concern for you or your Valentine, contact the manufacturer to discuss prior to purchasing.

Photo Credit: Rose City Chocolatier and Grocer's Daughter