

CAROB

What is Carob?

Carob is a Mediterranean pod tree, in the pea family, also known as St. John's bread. Carob has a very distinct and delightful flavor similar to chocolate. Carob dried or roasted and having a slightly sweet taste, in liquid, powder or chip form, is used as an ingredient in drinks, cakes and cookies. Carob is sometimes used as a substitute for chocolate. The seeds, also known as *locust beans*, are used as animal feed. They are also the source of locust bean gum, a thickening agent used in numerous processed foods i.e. ice cream, non-dairy cheeses and dips. In Egypt, carobs are consumed as a snack. Compotes and liqueurs are made from carob in Turkey, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Sicily. Carob has proven effective in relieving diarrhea in infants. In Libya, syrup is extracted from carob named rub used as a complimentary to Asida meal. In Peru la algarrobina a popular mixed drink made from carob syrup is used. Carob has also been used as a non-toxic alternative to chocolate in dog treats, as the theobromine in chocolate is toxic to all dogs.

Chocolate vs. Carob

Carob has many nutritional benefits. 1 cup of carob in powder form contains only 2 grams of fat, when compared with cocoa powder at 108 grams of fat per 1 cup. There is no caffeine in carob, compared to chocolate with 6 mg. per ounce of cocoa. Very high in complex carbohydrates, fiber, pectin, calcium and phosphorus carob also has trace amounts of iron.

How to cook with Carob

Carob powder can be evenly substituted for cocoa powder and also carob molasses equally substituted for chocolate syrup in recipes. You will need to adjust the sweeteners in any recipes you decide to experiment with at least $\frac{1}{4}$. In replacing baking chocolate, substitute 1Tbsp. carob powder + 1 Tbsp. non-dairy milk. This is = to one square of chocolate. Always store in airtight containers carob will last 1 year if stored properly after opening.

