



TAKE A BITE OUT OF EXTINCTION

// BY CATHERINE HESS

IT'S A TOUGH JOB, but someone has to help imperiled animals by eating chocolate.

Endangered Species Chocolate donates 10 percent of its net profits to organizations that help threatened and endangered animals. Its bars—with critters peering from the packaging—are easy to spot among premium chocolates. The company chooses two new beneficiaries every three years.

That 10 percent really adds up. The company has donated more than \$1 million total to the African Wildlife Foundation, which helps rhinoceroses, zebras, elephants and other African animals, and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

If the thought of helping bugs leaves you cold, consider that a rainforest fly called a midge is the only one who can spread pollen in cacao blossoms so that the tree bears fruit. Without these midges, there would be no chocolate.

Educating consumers is a big part of the company's philosophy. When an image of, say, a bat appears on a chocolate bar, the inside of the wrapper (newly redesigned as an infographic) shares facts about bats and a relevant group—in the case of bats, Bat Conservation International.

Monica Erskine, communications coordinator for the chocolatier, says that customers are enthusiastic about its charitable donations. Endangered Species Chocolate regularly shares updates on the work organizations are doing with the cash infusion.

"Our customers love to hear things like that," she says.

A recent innovation for the company is filled bars, which come in flavors such as lavender mint and have gotten good reviews. Entirely plant-based, these creamy new bars are a welcome vegan addition to the Endangered Species product line.

Erskine suggests mixing gently melted chocolate with hot plant-based milk and a little water, forming a liquid delight that can be sweetened to taste. Regular hot cocoa will seem like a pale imitation once you experience this treat.

For something a little more substantial, try this chocolate-flavored chili over veggie dogs. The antioxidants are good for you, right? And for endangered species.

CHILI VEGGIE DOGS SERVES 6

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INGREDIENTS

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| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 2 ounces vegan dark chocolate (about 9 squares of a large chocolate bar) |
| 1 onion, diced | 1 can (12-14 ounces) plain crushed tomatoes (without basil or other seasonings) |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced | 3 cups vegetable broth |
| 1 teaspoon paprika | Salt to taste |
| 1 teaspoon Mexican chili powder | 6 veggie dogs |
| 1 teaspoon cumin | 6 hot dog rolls |
| 1 teaspoon allspice | Shredded vegan cheese |
| ½ teaspoon cinnamon | |
| 2 teaspoons chili powder | |
| ½ teaspoon smoked paprika (optional) | |
| 1 bag of meat-free crumbles | |

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat the olive oil and cook the onion, garlic and spices for 5 minutes in a medium saucepan.
2. While this cooks, place the crumbles in a food processor and pulse until the large chunks are broken up. Add the crumbles, chocolate, tomatoes and vegetable broth to the pot and bring to a low boil.
3. Lower the heat and simmer slowly, uncovered, for about 40-60 minutes until the chili thickens. Stir frequently. Salt to taste.
4. Heat the hot dogs according to the package instructions. Toast the hot dog rolls, if desired, and place the hot dogs in the rolls. Serve the chili over the hot dogs. Top with cheese.

NUTRITION: All figures are per serving (assumes ½ cup chili per hot dog).
Calories: 310; Fat: 10 g; Carbs: 33 g; Fiber: 5 g; Protein: 18; Sodium: 769 mg

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