



By Melinda

Chocolate! This is my favorite subject besides 'green'. Chocolate is always a great gift for Mother's Day! What a better gift for mom than guilt free chocolate! When I say guilt free chocolate, I don't mean calorie and fat free. I mean child slave labor free, pesticide free, organically produced, sustainably produced, and ethically produced. Organic and fair trade chocolate supports local communities and maintains the Rainforest with its surrounding eco-systems. It is not hard to find this type of chocolate now a days, and pretty easy to order online. You can even get bite size pieces and truffles! [Check out the Green Guide's Shopper's List](#)

The Green Guide explains the [differences between organic, fair trade, and Rainforest Alliance certifications](#). For me, I decided it is better to have both the organic and fair trade certification, but if you can't get both, go with fair trade. My reasoning is this: under organic certification, they don't use agrochemicals but, it does not appear to require the plantations to use shade trees so I suspect the plants could be grown on clear cut rainforest. Fair trade requires use of shade grown cocoa when planted in the rainforest area, they don't use illegal pesticides, and they use integrated pest management. Fair trade also prevents the use of child slave labor and pays farmers fair wages. The Rainforest Alliance (RA) certification will allow agrochemical use if deemed necessary. It also only requires a minimum of 30% of the cocoa content to be RA certified. So, I assume you could get a chocolate bar with 70% cocoa uncertified from who knows where, while 30% is RA certified. Here are my picks from their list: (check out Sweet Earth and Global Exchange for Truffles)

[The Art Bar \(organic & fair trade\)](#)

Found at: Whole Foods and Global Exchange Online

[Divine \(fair trade\)](#)

Found at: Whole Foods - bars

Found Online: bars, mini bars, Easter eggs, coins, snack bars, fruit & nut bars, cocoa

[Eco Bella \(organic & fair trade\)](#)

Found Online: mini bars & regular bars

[Equal Exchange \(organic & fair trade\)](#)

Found at: Whole Foods: bars

Found Online: bars, hot cocoa & baking cocoa

[Shaman Chocolates \(organic & fair trade\)](#)

Found Online: bars

[Sweet Earth \(organic & fair trade\)](#)

Found Online: Easter Bunny & egg candy, truffles/confections, bars

[Theo Chocolate \(organic & fair trade\)](#)

Found at: Whole Foods

Found Online: bars

[Sunspire's chocolate chips for baking \(organic & fair trade\)](#)

Found at: Whole Foods & New Leaf

[Global Exchange has a variety of chocolate brands:](#)

Found Online: dark chocolate mini bars, Easter egg chocolates, chocolate truffles & confections

I have tried all of the listed chocolates above except for The Art Bar, Eco Bella and Shaman. Divine is my favorite right now and the most decadent. The others were very good too, and I use Sunspire chips for baking.

A word about Green & Blacks and Dagoba. (organic) These brands were bought by Cadbury and Hershey's respectively. These larger mainstream chocolate companies have been

associated with child trafficking and unsustainable practices for their mainstream conventional chocolate brands. You decide whether it helps to support their organic industry to help expand it or not to support their business at all. I am personally torn on this issue.

The suggestions above are given in the hopes of making it easier for everyone to find chocolate that is guilt free for mom and better for the earth. So, enjoy! Your mother and mother earth will thank you for it!