

Carob Chips: The Caffeine-Free Chocolate Substitute that's Actually Good for You

Dr. [draxe.com/nutrition/carob-chips](https://www.draxe.com/nutrition/carob-chips)
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If you're looking for an awesome **chocolate** substitute, look no further than carob chips. Carob is naturally sweet, rich and delicious. It also contains vital nutrients but is completely free of **caffeine**, making it a great option for kids and anyone looking to keep their caffeine intake low or nonexistent.

The fruit of the carob tree is used to make medicinal and food products, such as carob chips. Carob is a tasty food, but it's also used for a variety of health concerns, including **high cholesterol**, high blood sugar, diarrhea, vomiting, cough and even obesity. (1)

What Is Carob?

To answer what are carob chips, let me first tell you what is carob and what is carob powder. Carob comes from the carob tree (*Ceratonia siliqua*), which belongs to the pea family and is native to the eastern Mediterranean region. The tree produces fruit in the form of an edible bean or pod.

Carob trees, which are typically around 50 feet tall, have these pods that hold anywhere from five to 15 hard brown carob seeds that are surrounded by naturally sweet and edible pulp. Once these carob pods are ripe they can be dried and ground into carob powder. Carob powder is used to make food products like carob chips, and it's also used medicinally for a variety of health concerns.

Locust bean gum is another name for carob bean gum, and it comes from carob seeds. Carob gum is often used in skin care and other cosmetic products as a stabilizer, binder or texture enhanced. Carob bean gum is also added to many food products, such

as baked goods for these same reasons.

5 Health Benefits of Carob Chips

These are some of my favorite carob health benefits:

1. Diarrhea Relief
2. Lower High Cholesterol
3. **Combat Obesity**
4. Blood Sugar Management
5. Mineral Provider

1. Diarrhea Relief

One of carob's most impressive benefits is its scientifically demonstrated ability to help with diarrhea. **Diarrhea** is an unpleasant yet common problem experienced by many people for various reasons. When you're dealing with diarrhea, the food and liquid you take in ends up passing way too quickly through your system, resulting in an increased frequency and wateriness of your stools.

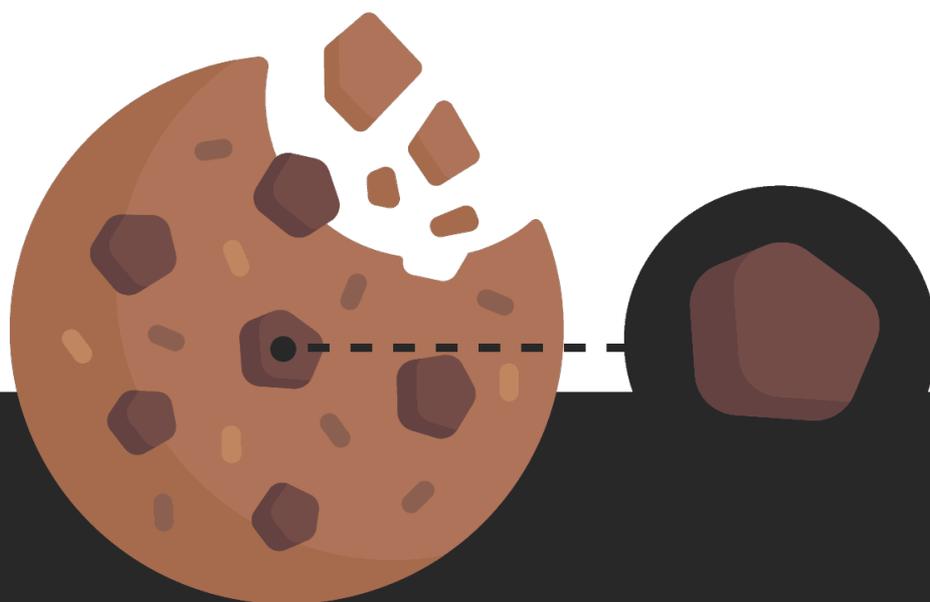
Carob powder has actually been used successfully to help treat cases of diarrhea in infants, children and adults. Why is carob helpful with this common digestive complaint? It appears to be carob's high tannin content, which has an "astringent or binding effect on the mucous membranes of the intestinal tract." (2) What are tannins? Tannins are water-soluble polyphenols that are present in many foods and beverages, including tea, pomegranate juice and berries, to name a few.

A double-blind trial published in the *Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition* looked at the effects of carob on infants between the ages of three months and 21 months with acute diarrhea due to a bacteria or virus. The infants were given oral rehydration fluids and randomly took either a placebo or a carob pod powder consisting of 40 percent tannins and 26.4 percent **dietary fiber** at a maximum of 15 grams per day for up to six days. What were the results? Normalized bowel movements and body temperature occurred more quickly in the infants who received the carob powder. They also stopped vomiting sooner. In addition, the young subjects accepted and tolerated the carob well. (3)

2. Lower High Cholesterol

A study published in the international journal *Plant Foods for Human Nutrition* found that carob's insoluble fiber has positive effects on cholesterol levels. The study credits the carob insoluble fiber's rich content of polyphenols with its ability to decrease both LDL ("bad") cholesterol as well as overall cholesterol in people with high cholesterol.

This 2010 study randomly divided 88 subjects with hypercholesterolemia to consume carob fiber or a placebo for four weeks. The results of the study reveal that carob consumers lowered their blood lipid levels in the following ways: overall cholesterol decreased by 6.1 percent; LDL cholesterol was reduced by 8.9 percent; LDL:HDL ratio went down by 14.3 percent; and triglycerides declined by 23.4 percent. Overall, the study concludes that consuming insoluble fiber rich in polyphenols (like the fiber found in carob) may be an effective natural way to both avoid and treat high cholesterol — making carob a **cholesterol-lowering food**. (4)



— BENEFITS OF — CAROB CHIPS



DIARRHEA RELIEF

Carob's high tannin content has an "astringent or binding effect on the mucous membranes of the intestinal tract"

(Source: NCBI)



LOWER HIGH CHOLESTEROL

Carob's insoluble fiber's rich content of polyphenols helps balance cholesterol

(Source: NCBI)



COMBATS OBESITY

The fiber content helps improve digestion, fend off constipation & promote satiety (Source: NCBI)

(Source: NCBI)



BLOOD SUGAR MANAGEMENT

The fiber content can help reduce risk of diabetes & balance blood sugar

(Source: Mayo Clinic)



MINERAL PROVIDER

Contains minerals like potassium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, iron, copper, zine & manganese

3. Combat Obesity

Research has shown that the consuming carob fiber has positive metabolic properties. Since carob contains insoluble fiber, it can help improve digestion and fend off constipation. Carob fiber can also help consumers to feel fuller longer, which is very helpful when it comes avoiding **overeating** and trying to maintain or reach a healthy body weight.

Studies have even shown that eating carob fiber can decrease levels of the hunger hormone **ghrelin** after a meal and improve fat oxidation, which are both great news for people struggling with obesity. According to researchers, “Carob powder could be a potential candidate in [the] diet regimen of obese and overweight persons.”(5, 6, 7)

4. Blood Sugar Management

Carob’s fiber content is also excellent for helping maintain **healthy blood sugar** levels. Carob does have a natural sugar content so you don’t want to overdo it, but in moderation insoluble fiber from carob and other nutritious foods as part of an overall healthy diet may help to decrease the likelihood of becoming a type 2 diabetic. (8)

5. Mineral Provider

You might already be familiar with how important minerals are to our health, but did you know that carob is a great source of minerals? It’s true! Carob contains significant amounts of key macrominerals (ones you need large amounts of daily) like potassium and **calcium**. In fact, when you compare 15 grams of carob powder to 15 grams of whole milk, the carob actually wins when it comes to calcium — the milk contains 16.9 milligrams of calcium while the carob powder contains 52 milligrams!

Other important macrominerals like magnesium and **phosphorus** are also found in carob fruit in lesser amounts. Plus, carob contains trace or microminerals, such as iron, copper, zinc and manganese. (9)

Carob Nutrition

Carob nutrition includes some protein, fiber as well as key nutrients like calcium, potassium and **iron**. Carob chips are made from carob powder. Just two tablespoons (12 grams) of carob powder contain roughly: (10)

- 28 calories
- 10.4 grams carbohydrates

- 0.8 gram protein
- 0 grams fat
- 5.6 grams fiber
- 5.6 grams sugars
- 4 milligrams sodium
- 42 milligrams calcium (4.2 percent DV)
- 100 milligrams potassium (2.9 percent DV)
- 0.32 milligrams iron (1.8 percent DV)

Carob vs. Chocolate

Unlike chocolate's main ingredient, **cacao** or cocoa (the name for cacao once it is roasted), carob pods have a natural sweetness. Carob taste is somewhat similar to chocolate but distinctly different at the same time.

Carob vs. chocolate, who wins? Well it's more of a comparison between carob and cocoa, chocolate's main ingredient. Let's compare to see who wins in the carob chocolate duel:

- Carob naturally has no caffeine while the cocoa used to make chocolate naturally contains caffeine. ([11](#))
- Carob has no oxalic acid (a naturally occurring substance found in chocolate and other foods that inhibits calcium absorption) while chocolate definitely contains this organic compound.
- Cocoa powder has more iron than carob, but carob powder contains some iron as well as key electrolytes like calcium and potassium.
- Carob is higher in beneficial dietary fiber compared to cocoa. ([12](#))
- Carob does not contain **theobromine**, which is what makes cocoa and chocolate naturally bitter in flavor.

CAROB
— VS. —
CHOCOLATE

MAIN INGREDIENT

MAIN INGREDIENT

CACAO OR COCOA

CAROB

CAFFEINE

YES

NO

OXALIC ACID (INHIBITS CALCIUMS ABSORPTION)

YES

NO

IRON

MORE

LESS, BUT HAS IRON,
ALONG WITH CALCIUM
& POTASSIUM

FIBER



How to Find and Use Carob

Carob chips as well as carob powder, carob bars, carob syrup and carob extract can typically be found at your local health store or online. You can substitute an equal amount of carob powder for cocoa powder. You can also use half carob chips/powder and half cocoa chips/powder in a recipe.

Carob chips add nutrients and natural sweetness to whatever they go into. So what are some of the best ways to use carob chips? For starters, carob chips are awesome in muffins, breads, cakes, pancakes and cookies. You can also add carob powder to **smoothies**.

Scientific trials have used specific amounts of carob for medicinal purposes. Remember to drink plenty of water when taking carob powder. For the treatment of diarrhea, 15 grams of carob powder per day has been used for children while 20 grams per day has been used for adults. The powder can also be mixed into foods like mashed sweet potatoes or unsweetened applesauce to make it easier to take the carob for medicinal reasons. Of course, if a young child has diarrhea it's important he or she receives adequate hydration and is under the care of a pediatrician.

Carob Chips Recipes

Carob chips can be used in any recipe that calls for chocolate chips so there are a ton of

options.

Here are some healthy and absolutely delicious carob recipes to try:

- **Carob Bark Recipe**
- **Gluten-Free Vegan Carob Brownies**
- **Gluten-Free Banana Buckwheat Carob Muffins**

You can also substitute carob chips for chocolate chips in these healthy treats:

- **Vegan Chocolate Chip Cookies Recipe**
- **Chocolate Banana Muffins Recipe**
- **Chocolate Chip Cookie Bars Recipe**

Carob History and Interesting Facts

Carob's use by humans is said to go all the way back to the ancient Egyptians, who fed carob pods to their livestock. It's also believed that they used carob gum as a form of glue in their mummification processes.

The carob tree is also referred to as St. John's bread or locust bean. These alternative namesakes originate from the Biblical story of John the Baptist when he was eating locusts. It's debatable, but some people believe that the "locusts" were carob pods rather than the actual insects. (13)

There are actually male and female carob trees, and the male trees do not produce any fruit. (14)

Carob Precautions and Interactions

You may already know how chocolate is toxic to dogs, but can dogs eat carob? Carob is safe for dogs. According to the ASPCA, it is non-toxic to dogs, cats and horses. (15)

It's possible yet not common to have an allergic reaction to carob, so if you notice any allergic symptoms, discontinue use.

There are currently no established interactions with carob. However, always check with your doctor before incorporating carob into your diet as a food or supplement if you are currently taking any other medications or have any ongoing health concerns.

Final Thoughts on Carob Chips

If you've been a lifelong fan of chocolate and chocolate chips, I totally get it, but if you've never tried carob chips I really think they are worth a taste. With a naturally sweet and rich taste, you just may start subbing carob chips for chocolate chips in your

next recipe. With zero caffeine yet lots of flavor and nutrients plus impressive health benefits, carob is a great healthy treat, in moderation of course.

The top five benefits of carbo chips include:

- Diarrhea Relief
- Lower High Cholesterol
- Combat Obesity
- Blood Sugar Management
- Mineral Provider

Read Next: Cacao Nibs: Superfood that Boosts Energy and Burns Fat
