

# Pine River Library Program in a Bag: D.I.Y. Hot Chocolate Mix



## Why Make Your Own Mix?

Making your own hot chocolate mix is easy and gives you the freedom to customize the recipe to suit your unique taste. Most packaged hot chocolates contain many artificial ingredients and large amounts of sugar. Curl up with your homemade mix and start the New Year off in a healthier way!

## A Little History

People have been drinking chocolate since around 500 BC, when the Mayans were making an unsweetened cold beverage made of ground cocoa seeds mixed with water, cornmeal, and chilies. In the early 1500s the conquistador Hernán Cortés brought cocoa beans and recipes back to Europe. The Spanish soon transformed the drink into a hot, sweetened beverage made without chilies, but it was over a century before the popularity of hot chocolate spread across the rest of Europe. In the late 1700s, milk was added in England, and the hot chocolate we know and love today was made.

## A Note on Ingredients

- Cacao vs. cocoa powder: Chocolate is made from cacao beans (actually they are seeds) from the *Theobroma cacao* tree. Cacao refers to cacao beans that have not been roasted, while what is called cocoa is made of beans that have been roasted. After the roasting process, the beans lose important nutritional value. Cacao products are richer in disease-fighting compounds including flavanols, which have antioxidant, heart-protective, and cancer fighting properties. It's also a good source of iron, fiber, and magnesium. This kit contains organic "cacao powder" instead of cocoa powder.
- Sweetener: This kit contains organic cane sugar, which is a healthier choice than processed white sugar. You can also feel free to use any alternative sweetener of your choice in this recipe. Coconut sugar is another healthier choice. If you want to leave the sugar out of the mix entirely, you can sweeten to taste in your cup with a spoonful of honey or a few drops of stevia or monkfruit extract.

## Sources:

[www.thespruceeats.com/the-history-of-hot-chocolate-764463](http://www.thespruceeats.com/the-history-of-hot-chocolate-764463)

[www.healthline.com/nutrition/cacao-vs-cocoa](http://www.healthline.com/nutrition/cacao-vs-cocoa)

[www.allrecipes.com/article/difference-between-cocoa-and-cacao/](http://www.allrecipes.com/article/difference-between-cocoa-and-cacao/)



# Hot Chocolate Mix Base Recipe

1/4-1/2 c. sugar (depending on your sweet tooth)

1/4 c. unsweetened cacao powder

1/2 c. powdered milk or instant nonfat dry milk

This amount should make about four mugs of hot chocolate, or less if you like your drink stronger. Once you figure out your preferred proportions, scale your recipe up to make larger batches for your family or to give away to friends!

- Mix all ingredients in a mixing bowl, stirring very thoroughly to get all the lumps out. A whisk works very well for this task.
- Store in a jar for up to six months.
- When making your drink, add about 1/4-1/3 cup of mix to the bottom of a 16 oz. mug, then pour in boiling water to fill the rest of the mug, immediately whisking the whole time you pour so the powder incorporates well into the water. Stir until there are no lumps left. If lumps remain, just skim them off the top of the drink with a spoon.

## Add-in Suggestions:

- A pinch of cinnamon and/or chili powder per mug for a Mexican style hot chocolate
- A pinch of salt
- 1/4 t. vanilla per mug
- Mini marshmallows can be added to the top of each mug or into the whole mix
- Crushed candy canes can be added to the whole mix (or a single mug)

