

# 6 GREAT L.A. CHOCOLATIERS AND CHOCOLATE SHOPS

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chocolate bars from Bar au Chocolat

*Bar au Chocolat*

Instead of being touted as a day of love, Valentine's Day should just be rechristened to “National Chocolate Day,” where it will be scrubbed of any treacly, romantic tropes and turned into a day of friendship. It could be a glorious day of gorging and sugar highs throughout the land, just like it was in elementary school.

Regardless of the day, though, sweets work alarmingly well as tokens of affection, olive branches or even bribes. And thankfully, Los Angeles has lots of local chocolatiers and chocolate shops to feed all sorts of cravings, whether its classic or psychedelic chocolate you seek. Here's 6 chocolate companies where you're sure to find the perfect chocolate for all eaters. Indulge away.





vanilla cashew bon bons at Anandamine

*Anandamine*

### **Anandamine Psychedelicatessen**

Sanskrit for "joy," "anandamine" is a natural occurring phenomenon in the brain dubbed the "bliss molecule." Similar compounds can be found in dark chocolate, a fact cheerfully exploited by Anandamine Psychedelicatessen in Long Beach. The extensive selection of chocolates are specially crafted from organic, raw and super foods. There are bars, bon bons and truffles of every stripe, like the maple butter truffle, coated in magical maca. The ganache is stone ground, in-house. The unusual ingredients, like lacuma, mesquite and Himalayan pink salt Anandamine a breed apart. Where can you buy treats for the person who is vegan, soy-free, gluten-free? Here – at a osychedelicatessen. You can't help but leave in a better mood than when you came in. 2040 E. 4th St., Long Beach; 562-438-1427.





scotch mallow hearts from Sees Candies

*See's Candies*

### **See's Candies**

Coming on a century of business in California (the company was founded in L.A. in 1921), See's Candies sells over a hundred types of chocolate and candy at its porcelain stores. It's a great shop for picking and choosing a box tailor-made for someone you love. The shop also offers a few specialties for Valentine's Day, like a classic red heart box that promises to make someone's own internal organ skip a beat. The Scotchmallow Hearts are another option. Made with chewy caramel, filled with house-made honey marshmallow and coated in dark chocolate, these adorable sweets are reminiscent of candy bars, only turned up to an eleven. There are also bags of hot hearts for those not fond of chocolate. [Look for See's Candies Shops throughout the city.](#)



hot cocoa at Chocovivo

*Chocovivo*

**Chocovivo**

The dark chocolate tasting bar at Chocovivo lets you taste thirteen chocolates for a mere \$10. The chocolate drink menu is ridiculous. There are hot and cold options as well as vegan options. There are a variety of bases (water, milk, nut milk), which get blended with a choice of chocolates. The percentage of cacao ranges from 65-100 percent. Additions, like cinnamon, coffee and vanilla are also possible. Try the chocogato – a play on affogato with, you guessed it, chocolate subbing for coffee. If you want to buy a gift, try one of their bars, distinctive flavors, like cherries, almonds and black peppercorns stand out from the crowded field. The shop also hosts events, like a screening of *Chocolat* for Valentine’s Day, or speed dating for those in the mood for love. As Chocovivo says, “Who wouldn’t want to fall in love in a chocolate shop?” 12469 West Washington Blvd., Los Angeles; 310-845-6259.



chocolates at Lady Chocolatt

## Lady Chocolatt

With over 300 different chocolates imported straight from Belgium, Lady Chocolatt imparts a certain kind of class bestowed on all things European. Both traditional and more daring flavors can be picked individually to make up the perfect box of chocolates, from Indian spices to pink pepper to violet. The variety of gift boxes alone can make your head swim with choices like a very glamorous red or an extravagant gold. Splurging has never been so fun. Order a large and fill it to the brim with classic pralines, Saint James whiskey ganache and champagne truffles. You may just get lucky. *12008 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles; 310-442-2245.*



chocolates from The Chocolate Project

*The Chocolate Project*

## The Gourmandise School/The Chocolate Project

Dive into an evening of pure chocolate at the Gourmandise School atop Santa Monica Place. Treat yourself to an evening with chocolatier Ruth Kennison on Valentine's Eve, where a four-hour intensive class will cover the history, science and tempering of chocolate. There is also plenty of tasting (Hawaiian and Vietnamese chocolate) and you get to bring home your own house-made chocolate bar. Kennison also sells goodies through The Chocolate Project. Bon bons, like blood orange caramel hearts and Mexican Coffee truffles put the artisan back into confections. *395 Santa Monica Place #329, Santa Monica; 310-656-8800.*





raw cacao beans from Bar au Chocolat

*Bar au Chocolat*

### **Bar au Chocolat**

When even the paper packaging is artisanal, you know the attention to detail will be verging on OCD – in a good way. Bar au Chocolat's bars are wrapped in handmade cotton. The bars themselves specify provenance – Madagascar, Brazil, Peru, Trinidad, Mexico, Dominican Republic – and percentage of cacao – 60-80 percent. The price tag, at \$12 a bar, is hefty, but true chocoholics will love the intensity of the flavor and the specialness of each wrapped candy. At the moment, these confections [can be bought online](#). Owner Nicole Trutanich will be opening a shop in Manhattan Beach later this year.

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