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THE ORIGINAL DEATH BY CHOCOLATE 17TH CENTURY CHOCOHOLICS GET REVENGE

How much do you love chocolate? Would you be willing to die for a taste of your favorite candy bar? Would you kill for one? You've probably never thought to ask yourself these questions, but if tall tales can be believed, arguments over chocolate have, in fact, turned deadly.

National Dark Chocolate Day and National Chocolate Fondue Day both fall this month (on Feb. 1 and Feb. 5, respectively), and in honor of those tasty holidays, we investigated the original "death by chocolate" — an act of legendary revenge.

Rumor has it that the controversy started in the 1600s in Chiapas, Mexico, when a group of chocoholic churchgoers started bringing their favorite sweet snack to services.

This annoyed the bishop, who resorted to banning parishioners from eating chocolate during church. As an article in Indian Country Today tells it, the chocoholics got back at the bishop by poisoning his daily cup of *chocolatl*, an Aztec chocolate drink. Who knew the ancestor of hot cocoa could be so deadly?

Surprisingly, this crazy story isn't the origin of the "death by chocolate" cake we love today. That dessert was created in 1993 by Chef Marcel Desaulniers, then-owner of The Trellis restaurant in Williamsburg, Virginia. Here's the restaurant's mouthwatering description of the seven-layer confection, which takes three days to make:

"The decadence begins with layers of moist chocolate cake, dark chocolate ganache,



crunchy chocolate meringue, and an airy chocolate mousse. The cake is then coated in a glaze of dark chocolate and served on a pool of chocolate sauce with house-made milk chocolate ice cream, topped with a hand-rolled white chocolate truffle, and finally dusted with white chocolate powder."

Is your mouth watering yet? The original version of death by chocolate might be a bit complex for the average chef, but if you're craving a slice, you can find more accessible recipes at Delish.com and SugarGeekShow.com. Just remember that when you pull it out of the oven, we don't live in the 1600s, so you should probably restrain yourself from poisoning anyone who steals a bite!



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STAY TRUE TO YOUR GOALS THROUGH FEBRUARY

If you're a forward-thinking, hardworking person, you probably set at least a few business or personal goals every January. You may have even accomplished some of them! Chances are, however, there are probably just as many that you haven't achieved. In fact, studies in recent years have shown that by the second week of February, around 80% of New Year's resolutions have been abandoned.

If this sounds familiar, does that mean that you've failed and that you should give up hope of ever achieving your goals? Absolutely not. Admittedly, I'm writing this article before February, so taking on 2021 feels a lot easier right now. But, if your resolutions are currently among that 80%, you can continue to push forward using a few simple ideas.

By now, you're probably aware of the SMART system for setting goals. You may have even used this methodology to plan your goals for 2021. If you're not aware, SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. You can find all sorts of info on the specifics of each of those qualities online. While you're more likely to achieve your goals if they're SMART, that might not be all it takes. According to direct sales trainer Deb Bixler, writer for TheBalance.com, our goals shouldn't just be SMART; they should be SMARTER.

SMARTER goals are ones where you also Evaluate and Reevaluate. While SMART goals may seem easy to achieve, you'll never know how easy the process actually is until you get started. Then you might find out that your plans don't work and the action steps that you laid out don't bring you as close to achieving your goal as you'd hoped. Instead of giving

up, however, that's when you should take some time to evaluate your progress. What action steps are working well? Which ones need to be tweaked? These are the perfect sorts of questions to ask yourself this month if you're thinking of giving up.



However, evaluation isn't the only means to success. You might find that adjusting your plan for achieving your goals might not change anything. In fact, the new plan might even be less effective than what you did previously. That's why you have to continually reevaluate your plans and your goals. What works this month might not work next month, so you have to be ready for that.

At the end of it all, I've also found it's helpful to acknowledge that we don't always set the best goals for ourselves at the start of the year. We may find out that the goal we thought would be good for us actually doesn't have the impact we were striving for. Say your goal is to wake up every morning before work and go for a run. While that might have a great impact on your physical fitness, it might also mean you're tired all day at work and you're less productive. At a certain point, you might have to find a different goal, and that's okay. Just because you decide to abandon one goal doesn't mean you're giving up on success.

This month, I want to encourage all of you to resist the urge to quit striving for success. Evaluate and reevaluate your plans, and don't be afraid to find a new path to success if your goals aren't serving you as you intended.

-Eric Holquin

BYOB: BUILD YOUR OWN BOOKSHELF

Have you ever found a great bookshelf for your living room only to learn that it's just a few inches from being perfect? Instead of buying a bookshelf that's too small or too big, why not make your own? All you need are some measurements and the right materials. But what are the best materials for a bookshelf?

Wood Wood is the most popular option for DIY bookshelves. Each type of wood has its own aesthetic, providing several different options for different looks. Plus, wood is sturdy and easy to use. If you're considering building a wooden bookshelf, first decide whether to use hardwood or softwood. While this ultimately comes down to your personal preference, there are some differences to consider.

Hardwoods are heavier and are more resistant to scratches. Softwoods are lighter and, when treated correctly, can be just as sturdy and scratch-resistant as hardwoods. Something to keep in mind, however, is that some softwoods, such as pine, will bow under heavy weight. If you're planning to use your bookshelf to store heavy books, a hardwood, such as birch, might be the better option.



Engineered Wood Composite wood materials like plywood and particleboard can also be used to build a bookshelf. Engineered wood is inexpensive and readily available. These materials tend to be dense, though they may not be as strong or sturdy as other options. One major drawback is that composite woods don't look as nice, especially compared to their real wood counterparts. However, some types of engineered wood, such as cabinet-grade plywood, have the appearance of real wood or can be painted.

Metal Metal bookshelves have increased in popularity over the years. When combined with a wood shelf, a metal-framed bookshelf's modern aesthetic will make any room pop. Not only do metal bookshelves look good, but they are also very sturdy and can house even the heaviest books.

If you're looking for a tutorial on building a bookshelf, check out the "DIY Metal & Wood Bookshelf" video on YouTube from DIY Huntress. Another great resource is the step-by-step tutorial titled "How to Build a Bookshelf" from HomeDepot.com.

INSPIRED IN CHICAGO CARTER G. WOODSON AND BLACK HISTORY MONTH



February is Black History Month, a time to recognize the countless men and women who helped change the American cultural, social, and scientific landscape. Black history is American history, and the two are inexorably linked.

Black History Month itself can be traced back to Chicago in 1915, the 50th anniversary of emancipation by the state of Illinois. For reference, the Emancipation Proclamation was delivered by President Abraham Lincoln on Jan. 1, 1863, but Illinois put its own emancipation into effect in 1865.

In 1915, thousands of African Americans went to Chicago to attend an exhibition that chronicled the many achievements African Americans had made since emancipation and partake in a three-week celebration. Carter G. Woodson, one of the attendees, was inspired by the event. In the months following the exhibition, Woodson worked with several of his Black colleagues to found the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Woodson's goal was to bring the achievements of Black Americans to the national stage.

These efforts led to the creation of The Journal of Negro History in 1916. Woodson and his colleagues published Black Americans' achievements along with insights from Black Americans around the country. Woodson challenged others to follow in his

footsteps, and they did. In 1924, Negro History Week was founded, which eventually became known as Negro Achievement Week. It was part of greater outreach in many communities around the country to bring awareness of Black Americans' achievements.

But Woodson and others wanted more. Through the 1920s and '30s, Black culture expanded in the U.S. At the same time, more Black history was being taught in schools, even as Black communities faced continued oppression, especially in the Southern states.

As the civil rights movement took hold in the '50s and '60s, people made even greater strides. More people were learning about Black history, and more Black Americans explored where they had come from, looking to their African ancestors for inspiration. During this time, many were also celebrating Black History Month, which quickly replaced Negro History Week.

In 1976, Black History Month was finally recognized nationally — 50 years after Carter G. Woodson made strides to change the American cultural landscape. Today, he and countless others are credited with having a major positive impact on American culture.



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—*Nick E.*



BUTTER AND HERB BAKED OYSTERS

INGREDIENTS

- * Rock salt or uncooked rice (to coat your baking sheet)
- * 1 dozen fresh oysters, scrubbed and shucked
- * 1 stick butter, softened and divided into 8 tbsps
- * 3/4 cup panko breadcrumbs
- * 2 tbsp fresh chives, chopped
- * 1 tbsp lemon juice
- * 1 tsp lemon zest
- * Lemon wedges and chopped parsley for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. On a rimmed baking sheet, spread out a layer of rock salt or uncooked rice.
3. Arrange oysters on the baking sheet, meat side up.
4. In a skillet over medium heat, melt half of the butter. Add breadcrumbs and sauté until brown.
5. In a small bowl, combine remaining butter, chives, lemon juice, and zest.
6. Top each oyster with a teaspoon of chive mixture and a sprinkle of sautéed breadcrumbs.
7. Bake for 8–10 minutes and serve garnished with lemon wedges and chopped parsley.

Inspired by [TheSpruceEats.com](#)

MEMES

