

Delicious Alternatives to Candy

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Candy is popular worldwide but mostly made from sugar, artificial flavors, and food dyes, which provide calories but very little nutrition.

In fact, eating it may increase your risk of cavities, obesity, and type 2 diabetes ([1Trusted Source](#)).

If you're craving sweets but want to stick to a balanced diet, there are plenty of treats you can indulge in instead of processed candy bars. ALWAYS eat organic non-gmo sugars.

Here are 16 healthy and delicious alternatives to candy.

1. Fresh Fruit

[Fresh fruit](#) is naturally sweet and packed with nutrients like fiber, vitamins, and minerals. It may also provide anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties ([2Trusted Source](#)).

Unlike candy, fruits are usually low in calories and [high in fiber](#) ([3Trusted Source](#)).

For example, 1 cup (144 grams) of strawberries provides only 46 calories but 3 grams of fiber and 94% of the Daily Value (DV) for vitamin C ([4](#)).

2. Dried Fruit

Because it's dehydrated, dried fruit is highly concentrated in nutrients and sugar, making it even sweeter and calorie-denser than fresh fruit – so be mindful of your portions.

Still, studies suggest that people who eat [dried fruit](#) have good diet quality and nutrient intake, two factors associated with lower body weight ([5Trusted Source](#)).

You can find almost any fruit dried, but make sure your product doesn't contain [added sugars](#).

3. Homemade Popsicles

Homemade popsicles give you all the benefits of fruit without the extra sugar and artificial ingredients of packaged varieties.

To prepare them, simply blend your choice of fruit with water, juice, or plant based [milk](#). Pour the mixture into popsicle molds or plastic cups, place a popsicle stick in the center of each, and freeze overnight.

If you prefer a creamy texture, blend with [yogurt](#) or coconut yogurt – or simply insert a popsicle stick straight into a yogurt cup and freeze for a quick dessert.

4. 'Nice Cream'

"Nice cream" refers to fruit-based ice cream, which you can make by blending frozen fruit with optional add-ins – like [peanut butter](#), honey, or coconut milk – and freezing the mix.

Here's an easy recipe to get you started:

Strawberry-Banana 'Nice Cream'

- 1 large, peeled, frozen banana
- 1 cup (144 grams) of frozen strawberries

Directions:

Cut the [banana](#) into slices and the strawberries into halves. Pulse in a food processor until smooth, scraping the sides when necessary.

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5. Frozen Fruit

Contrary to popular belief, [frozen fruit](#) preserves the nutrients of fresh fruit because it's fully ripened before being frozen (6).

At home, you can freeze fruit with yogurt for a quick, simple snack.

Frozen-Yogurt-Covered Blueberries

- 1/2 cup (148 grams) of [blueberries](#)
- 1/2 cup (200 grams) of low-fat Greek or coconut yogurt

Directions:

1. Cover a baking tray with parchment paper.
2. Stab a blueberry with a toothpick and dip it into the yogurt, making sure it gets fully coated.
3. Place the yogurt-covered blueberry on the baking sheet.
4. Repeat with the rest of the berries and freeze overnight.

6. Fruit and Veggie Chips

Fruit and veggie chips are cut into thin slices before being baked, which gives them their characteristic crunchy texture.

These chips boost your daily fruit and [vegetable intake](#), which may help lower your risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and certain [cancers](#) (7[Trusted Source](#), 8[Trusted Source](#)).

Instead of choosing store-bought options that may harbor added sugar and preservatives, make your own fruit and veggie chips by following one of [these recipes](#).

7. Homemade Fruit Leather

Homemade fruit leather is a sweet and chewy treat loaded with nutrients.

You can use any fruit you want – but choosing high-sugar options, such as mangoes, means you won't have to add too much sweetener.

Mango Fruit Leather

- 2-3 cups (330-495 grams) of [mangoes](#)
- 2-3 tablespoons (15-30 ml) of honey
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of lemon juice

Directions:

1. Blend the mangoes in a blender or food processor until smooth.
2. Add [honey](#) and lemon juice and blend a little more.
3. Pour the mixture into a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and spread to 1/8-1/4-inch (0.3-0.6-cm) thickness.
4. Bake at 140-170°F (60-77°C) or the lowest temperature on your oven for 4-6 hours.
5. Allow to cool, then remove from the tray.
6. Cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) strips and wrap with parchment paper before rolling them up.

8. Energy Balls

Energy balls are typically made with wholesome ingredients that provide enough fiber, protein, and healthy fats to keep you feeling full (9[Trusted Source](#), 10[Trusted Source](#)).

Oats, nut butter, [flax seeds](#), and dried fruits are the most common ingredients. However, you can mix in almost anything you want, from protein powder to chocolate chips.

Nevertheless, they pack a lot of calories, so try to limit yourself to one or two at a time.

Coconut-Dusted Energy Balls

- 1/2 cup (72 grams) of raw almonds
- 1/2 cup (58 grams) of raw walnuts
- 1 cup (73 grams) of raisins

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- 3 pitted dates
- 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- 1 cup (93 grams) of shredded coconut

Finely chop the almonds and walnuts in a food processor, then add the rest of the ingredients – except the coconut – and pulse until you get a sticky mixture.

Form 1-inch (2.5-cm) balls with your hands, then roll them in [shredded coconut](#) until fully coated.

9. Homemade Honey-Roasted Nuts

Nuts are packed with unsaturated fatty acids, which may promote [heart health](#) by reducing heart disease risk factors. In fact, research suggests that eating [nuts](#) may lower LDL (bad) cholesterol by 3-19% ([11Trusted Source](#)).

They're also high in fiber, high-quality protein, and beneficial plant compounds ([12Trusted Source](#)). Roasting nuts with honey makes a perfect sweet-and-salty treat. Try [this recipe](#) for your next candy replacement.

10. Dark-Chocolate Coconut Chips

Dark chocolate is known for its high levels of antioxidants, which may improve heart health, brain function, and insulin sensitivity ([13Trusted Source](#), [14Trusted Source](#), [15Trusted Source](#), [16Trusted Source](#)).

Meanwhile, coconut is an excellent source of [medium-chain triglycerides](#) (MCTs), a type of fat that may boost weight loss, fat metabolism, and gut health ([17Trusted Source](#)).

The sweetness of coconut chips masks the slight bitterness of [dark chocolate](#), making a crunchy treat that can be eaten alone or used as a topping for coconut yogurt.

You can make dark-chocolate-covered coconut chips at home by following [this recipe](#), or you can purchase them pre-made – in which case you should check the ingredient list to avoid added sugars.

11. Dark-Chocolate-Covered Strawberries

Dark-chocolate-covered strawberries are another way to reap dark chocolate's benefits.

What's more, strawberries are packed with [antioxidants](#) and vitamins that may help prevent heart disease ([18Trusted Source](#), [19Trusted Source](#), [20Trusted Source](#)).

To prepare them, dip these [berries](#) in melted dark chocolate. Place on wax paper and freeze for 15-20 minutes.

12. Trail Mix

Trail mix typically combines nuts, seeds, grains, dried fruit, and chocolate, providing you with fiber, [protein](#), and many beneficial plant compounds.

However, store-bought options may be loaded with added sugar, so it's best to make your own.

For a healthy, homemade version, mix cashews, cranberries, pretzels, [pumpkin seeds](#), and dark chocolate chips.

13. Sugar-Baked Chickpeas

Chickpeas, which are also called garbanzo beans, are rich in protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

One cup (164 grams) of cooked [chickpeas](#) pack 15 grams of high-quality protein and 13 grams of fiber ([21](#)). Moreover, they may boost heart health and reduce your risk of certain conditions, including type 2 diabetes ([22Trusted Source](#)).

For a chickpea-based treat, try this simple recipe.

Cinnamon-Roasted Chickpeas

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Ingredients:

- 1 cup (164 grams) of cooked chickpeas
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of olive oil
- 2 tablespoons (30 grams) of organic non-gmo brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon (8 grams) of ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon (5 grams) of salt

Preheat your oven to 400°F (204°C) and bake the chickpeas for 15 minutes. In a bowl, mix the [cinnamon](#), and salt.

Remove chickpeas from the oven, drizzle with olive oil, and sprinkle with the cinnamon topping. Stir until fully coated and bake for another 15 minutes.

14. Healthy Cookie Dough

Edible cookie dough is an egg-free batter that makes a scrumptious [snack](#).

For a healthy version, use chickpeas instead of flour to increase the fiber and protein content ([23Trusted Source](#)).

Chickpea-Based Edible Cookie Dough

- 1 cup (164 grams) of cooked chickpeas
- 3 tablespoons (45 grams) of organic non-gmo [brown sugar](#)
- 1/4 cup (65 grams) of natural peanut butter
- 3 tablespoons (45 grams) of oats
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of skim milk
- 2 teaspoons (10 ml) of vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon of baking soda
- a pinch of salt
- a handful of chocolate chips

In a food processor, blend all the ingredients except the chocolate chips. When smooth, place the dough in a bowl and mix in the chocolate chips.

15. Avocado-Chocolate Pudding

Avocados are a great source of healthy fats, fiber, and beneficial plant compounds. They also provide vitamins and minerals like vitamin C, folate, and potassium ([24Trusted Source](#), [25](#)).

Research shows that the fat and fiber in [avocados](#) may help reduce appetite, which is essential for weight control ([26Trusted Source](#), [27Trusted Source](#), [28Trusted Source](#), [29Trusted Source](#)).

You can make a creamy pudding by blending this fruit with just a few simple ingredients, such as [cocoa powder](#) and a sweetener of your choice. For example, [this recipe](#) uses maple syrup for a delectable treat.

16. Baked Apples

[Apples](#) are rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and other plant compounds.

One medium-sized apple (182 grams) packs 17% of the DV for fiber, 9% of the DV for vitamin C, and powerful plant compounds, including polyphenols that may protect against chronic disease ([30](#)).

Studies show that people who eat this [fruit](#) regularly have a reduced risk of cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and weight gain ([31Trusted Source](#), [32Trusted Source](#)).

To make baked apples, cut them into chunks, add a bit of melted coconut oil and cinnamon, and bake for 20-30 minutes at 350°F (176°C).