

# ZOOM

Chocolate

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## Love in a Clever Disguise

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The first thing that struck me was the name. It true that love is always lurking about in some sort of disguise and chocolate is no different. Chocolate is made with love, chocolate is offered with love, or even instead of love. Those who are depressed are said to gorge on chocolate that might make them happier, therefore supplant the love that is lacking.

But can you really find love in a 4" x 4" intense fuchsia-colored box? Absolutely. After managing to maladroitly unwrap the golden ribbon and getting the box open, I laid my eyes upon some of the most aromatic chocolates I have had so far.

Strong, yet bitter sweet, their flavor breached the frontier of my fondness and I instantly took a liking to them. I could tell they had character. So I tried the raspberry one, I could recognize it by the pink heart climbed on top of the bonbon- what a delight, dark chocolate infused with a ganache that had extracted the best in a raspberry. It was a bit sour like the fruit itself and so fresh, that its crispness bled pleasure. The honey chocolate had a gold logo on top and it exuded a certain majesty. Dark and milk chocolate combined with Tasmanian honey made a perfect little sphere of pleasure. The honey came off in a strong concentration and it was so exquisite that I would not have guessed the flavor had I not read the description. Last came the might espresso topped with a coffee bean. Milk chocolate tamed the wild but sweet aroma of coffee and rounded up its magnificent flavor.

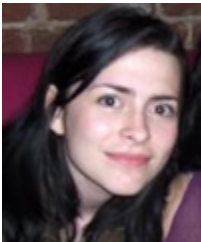
These are just the one I tasted, but the rest look even better. There are more from where these beauties came from: Chocolate Love Clusters (crispy wafers combined with various chocolates),

Dreaming in Chocolate (a dream of a heart-shaped bonbon in intense pink- raspberry and lime green- mint) or a Love Bar Trio (well, chocolate bars of Belgian white, milk or dark descent). A Taste of Heaven is a collection that contains 27 piece and includes truffles with mint, dark, coffee, almond gianduja, sweet basil, two-layer pistachio and cardamom, Spanish saffron, honey, spice and Earl Grey. They even come in customized boxes that look just as good as the chocolates.

These goodies are made with love by Uzma Sharif in her Chicago kitchen and sold online through her website and [www.chocolate.com](http://www.chocolate.com) and by some local retailers. "Love in Disguise" was founded in March 2005 when Uzma decided to put all that culinary training and her love for worldly flavors to good use. Her grandfather who was a pastry chef back in Pakistan must have passed on the gene. Add to your innate talent some specialty education with some of the best chefs, and lots of work (about ten years in this industry) and you've got Uzma, an energetic and dedicated woman. Inspired by the beauty around her and her travels, she began experimenting with flavors and came up with her own recipes. She started with 17 flavors, but she had to choose the 11 that she thought were the best. Now that she picked her favorites, there are no more favorites, as she likes all her creations the same. Me too, Uzma. It's no wonder they taste so good since all ingredients are fresh and perky.

We should get together and taste more of your chocolates. I am sure we will both reach the same conclusion. They are wonderful.

**About editor:**



Cristina Jaleru is a freelance writer, translator and publicist who travels extensively and sometimes stops in order to work on a movie set or grab a hot chocolate.