



10 best... Luxury chocolates

Pimp your edible presents by giving flavours from spicy wasabi to Eton Mess... and a pistachio praline to die for



[1] BETTYS PIEDMONT HAZELNUT PRALINES

Oh, Betty's, how we love you. This year, the Yorkshire tearoom and cakery's Christmas offering includes delicate hazelnut pralines. Their flavour is rich and nutty, with a nice crunch provided by caramelized wafer which is shot through the middle. The chocolate is thick, smooth and decadent. Who could ask for more? **£15.25, bettys.co.uk**

[2] PIERRE HERMÉ CHOCOLAT AU MACARON

Half macaron, half chocolate – totally addictive. The revered patisserie chef has combined his two great loves to create a box of dainty bonbons which have a thin macaron-like crust which gives way to a rich fruit ganache. **£22, pierreherme.com**

[3] ROCOCO POPPING CHAMPAGNE TRUFFLES

Chantal Coady, Rococo's owner, is a recipient of the Academy of Chocolate's Lifetime Achievement Award and it's not hard to see why when you taste these truffles. A Valrhona chocolate base has been mixed with champagne and studded with exploding candy to create a mini party for your tastebuds. **£12.25, rococochocolates.com**

[4] PIERRE MARCOLINI PRALINE

Pierre Marcolini's Christmas shell pralines are a thing of wonder. If you happen to find a box in your stocking on the big day, go straight for the creamy pistachio flavour; sublime. **£26, marcolini-eboutique.com**

[5] LAUDEN FRESH MINT CHOCOLATES

After Eights may have gone out with John Major's government, but the concept – a touch of mint with some dark chocolate – lives on. Mercifully, the mint here is fresh, and the chocolate has over 65 per cent cocoa solids. **£9.99, laudenchocolate.com**

[6] GORVETT AND STONE MIXED

This Oxford-based chocolatier specialises in putting an eccentric spin on traditional British chocs. Its mixed box is best, not least because it contains a healthy quota of G&S's Eton Mess, which is a tastebud-tickling mixture of meringue, raspberry ganache and freeze dried raspberries. **£8.95, gorvettandstone.com**

[7] GODIVA CHRISTMAS

If it's good enough for the King of Belgium it's good enough for us. The Royal Warrant holder's chocolates are milky as you like, and contain a good assortment of its flavours, from

boozy liquor to crystallised fruits. **£14.50, godiva.be**

[8] CHARBONNEL ET WALKER ROSE & VIOLET CREAMS

For some the royal chocolatier's famed rose and violet creams taste like granny's old bottle of Estée Lauder perfume, for others they are manna from heaven. Get a box of the dark chocolate and fragrant oil choc and decide if they are a taste for you. **£18, charbonnel.co.uk**

[9] WILLIAM CURLEY COUTURE

By the looks of these, Willy Wonka has become Willy Curley. The Richmond-based chocolatier's box of weird and wonderful creations include apricot and wasabi, Japanese black vinegar, and thyme and muscovado caramel – Britain's best chocolate, according to the Academy of Chocolate. **£21.50, williamcurley.co.uk**

[10] MONTEZUMA CHRISTMAS TRUFFLE

These are rich; very rich indeed. But as a Christmas treat they are hard to better. The bag has a mix of milk chocolate mandarin caramels, a moreish vanilla creation and an espresso truffle. **£4.99, montezumas.co.uk**

CHOSEN BY SAMUEL MUSTON