



## *The Journal*



# The Ganachery at Disney World Your Cure for the Common Chocolate

Orlando Florida Feb 1, 2016; Oh, the powers of chocolate. The mere mention of that wonderful confection invokes a smile on my face, so when I discovered the removal of the tarps and fencing around The Ganachery Chocolate Shoppe during my recent visit to Walt Disney World, I gasped in excitement.

I quickly joined the others lined up outside the quaint store to experience the latest addition to Disney Springs. While waiting for the tantalizing treats inside, one of the cast members brought out a small cup of their decadent 65 percent dark chocolate ganache for us to taste and to further peak our interest For this shop's grand opening. She also provided a brief description of the chocolate consisting of a blend of cocoa from the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Brazil, as well as described several of the hand-crafted wonders that resided just beyond those double doors.



The Ganachery serves sixteen distinct made-in-house chocolates, nine varieties of custom made chocolate bars to celebrate Disney's iconic destinations and the "Fab Five" (Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Goofy, Pluto and Donald Duck), as well as a few other cocoa-induced delights all ranging in price.

These amazingly, unique confections were conceived by Disney Pastry Chef Stefan Riemer. With his expertise and ingenuity, along with his time abroad to obtain the world's best chocolate, Chef Stefan provides a new experience for all chocolate lovers.



Photo: Stephenie Pashkowsky

### Oscartek Gem model displaying Chocolates

With a chocolate stollen in hand, I made my way over to one of the two ganache cases, where Cast Member Akira assisted me in my selection. I gazed adoringly at the beautifully crafted chocolate pieces that lined the trays before me.

“Would you care to sample something?” Akira inquired.

“Oh, yes, please!”

Akira graciously handed me a small taste of the pistachio and orange fillings used in two of their chocolate pieces. The creamy, green pistachio substance brought me back to my time in Rome, enjoying some pistachio gelato, and the Floridian orange filling had a wonderful sweet, tangy taste that reminded me of biting into a sweet and juicy ripe orange right off the tree (minus the mess).

Coming back to my senses and returning to stare at all the lovely decorated chocolate pieces through the glass, I opted for a box with six chocolate pieces—Orange: Fresh Florida Oranges with Dark Chocolate; Pistachio: Sicilian Pistachios with Dark Chocolate; Vanilla: Madagascan Vanilla Bean with Dark Chocolate; Mango-Curry: Indian Curry and Mangos with Dark Chocolate; Matcha-Yuzu: Japanese Green Tea and Yuzu with Dark Chocolate; and Chipotle Pepper: Dark Chocolate with a hint of Mexican Red Pepper. What can I say, I love dark chocolate.

With my decision made, Akira carefully placed my confectionary prize, all wrapped in tissue paper, inside an elegant, tan box, sealed with a tight-fitting cardboard sleeve. Even the box is a work of art, because for Chef Stefan, this quality of chocolate must be appreciated like a fine wine.

And what an experience! As I made my way further into the store, one of the fourteen cast members specially trained to provide a personalized venture for each customer gave me a grand tour of the boutique shop. The décor of golds, coppers, and browns set the tone for the store with a copper pot chandelier, a copper-tiled ceiling, and signs on the walls that read There’s Nothing presented the display of the aforementioned chocolate bars, such as the Minnie Mouse bar consisting of milk chocolate with dried strawberries and the Aulani bar containing white chocolate with pineapple and coconut. The back shelves showcased these generously-sized chocolate bars, along with Crispy Chocolate Pearls and the Chocolate Enrobed Stollen—which involves a thin layer of dark chocolate filled with a light cake-like substance, marzipan, bits of orange peel, lemon zest, and a hint of Grand Marnier. Talk about incredible.



Oscartek Provino for added storage

“It has nothing to do with ‘candy,’” he explains. “Textures, tastes, colors – this is about relaxing and enjoying a bite-size indulgence.” After my experience at The Ganachery Chocolate Shoppe and having enjoyed all my purchased treats, I can agree with Chef Stefan’s statement. Those chocolate squares and that chocolate stollen upheld to standards above and beyond any normal store-bought chocolate bar. I only hope that this little chocolate shop makes its way out to the Disneyland Resort to provide the same unique experience and enjoyment I received at its East Coast counterpart. The Ganachery captured my heart and captivated my taste buds, and I look forward to a return trip to Orlando to savor more of its decadent offers.

May these little pieces of chocolate inspire big ideas, lasting friendships and a life time of laughter.” –The Ganachery

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## Why Organic Food Might Be Worth the High Price

The most infamous fact about organic food is that it’s expensive—about 47% more expensive, according to a recent analysis from Consumer Reports. But a new review study published in Nature Plants analyzed everything research currently knows about organic farming versus the conventional kind and found that organic offers a lot of good that outweighs its sticker shock.

When organic farming first began, it was derided as an idealistic and inefficient way of feeding people. Not surprisingly, there was little research about it. “There were just a couple handfuls of studies back in the ‘80s,” says John Reganold, professor of soil science and agroecology at Washington State University and co-author of the new study. Reganold has been studying organic agriculture for more than 30 years. “At the turn of the century, it just skyrocketed, and now there are probably at least 1,000 studies,” he says.

Reganold analyzed 40 years of available data and focused on how organic farming impacts several types of sustainability: productivity, impact on the environment, economic viability and social wellbeing.

“If I had to put it in one sentence, organic agriculture has been able to provide jobs, be profitable, benefit the soil and environment and support social interactions between farmers and consumers,” Reganold says. “In some ways, there are practices in organic agriculture that really are ideal blueprints for us to look at feeding the world in the future.”

Organic may even be our best bet to help feed the world in an increasingly volatile climate, he says.



At first, this might sound unlikely, given that the crop yields of organic agriculture are typically 10-20% lower than conventional. That's because conventional growers can use synthetic fertilizers, most of which aren't allowed in organic food production. "When farmers add fertilizers, those nutrients are immediately available to the plant, and the plants can grow faster," Reganold explains. Organic crops, on the other hand, are fertilized by organic matter like compost or animal manure, which takes more time to decompose and release its nutrients. (This slow, steady approach is called building the soil.)

But Reganold found one scenario where the research shows that organic yields are consistently greater than conventional: during periods of drought. Organic soil is built up with organic material, which can hold onto water, he says. That means that by the time a

farmer plants and grows a crop, the plant has access to more water, so yields increase. For every inch of rainwater soaked up by soil, a plant can produce another 7-8 bushels of wheat, Reganold says.

Organic farming typically uses less energy, too. "When you look at ecosystem services organic agriculture really shines," he says. "The value they bring in areas like biodiversity, pollination, soil quality—if you were to put an economic value on those, and some researchers have, then it more than makes up for the higher price or price premium of organic food."

A 2015 meta-analysis about the economics of organic farming, published in the journal PNAS, even determined that organic farming is more profitable than conventional, earning farmers 22% to 35% more money. They determined that the organic price premium (which was around 30% in the study) only had to be about 5% for organic profits to break even with conventional.

There's a lot left to learn about organic food, including whether or not it's healthier than conventional in a meaningful way. The latest study points out that of the 15 or so scientific reviews focusing on nutrition, 12 studies have found evidence that organic is more nutritious than conventional by having more vitamin C, antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids. Other studies indicate that children who eat organic foods have lower levels of pesticide metabolites in their bodies than those who eat conventional.

The popularity of organic food is growing fast. Back in 1997, less than 1% of the food and beverage market was organic, and now it's 5%, Reganold says. But organic faces several setbacks. "We have policies that support the more conventional model," Reganold says, along with a relative dearth in research about organic agriculture.

## Organic or Natural? What's the difference?

INGREDIENT/PROCESSING	ORGANIC	NATURAL	CONVENTIONAL
Artificial flavors	<b>NEVER</b>	No	May be used
Artificial colors	<b>NEVER</b>	No	May be used
Artificial preservatives	<b>NEVER</b>	No	May be used
Artificial fertilizers	<b>NEVER</b>	May be used	May be used
Artificial pesticides	<b>NEVER</b>	May be used	May be used
Irradiation	<b>NEVER</b>	May be used	May be used
Genetically Engineered Ingredients	<b>NEVER</b>	May be used	May be used

“The challenge facing policymakers is to create an enabling environment for scaling-up organic and other innovative farming systems to move towards truly sustainable production systems,” the study concludes. “This is no small task, but the consequences for food and ecosystem security could not be bigger.”

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