

United Arab Emirates Chocolate - Market Share Analysis, Industry Trends & Statistics, Growth Forecasts (2026 - 2031)

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Report description:

United Arab Emirates Chocolate Market Analysis

The United Arab Emirates chocolate market is expected to grow from USD 537.30 million in 2025 to USD 566.68 million in 2026 and is forecast to reach USD 739.39 million by 2031 at 5.47% CAGR over 2026-2031. This steady growth continues even as cocoa prices nearly doubled between 2024 and 2025, highlighting the sustained demand for premium and artisanal chocolate products, which appear to be less affected by fluctuations in raw material costs. Health-conscious expatriates are increasingly opting for dark, vegan, and sugar-free chocolate variants, aligning with global trends toward healthier consumption. Meanwhile, the rise of quick-commerce services, which significantly reduce delivery times, is fostering impulse purchases among consumers. Furthermore, the demand for luxury packaging, particularly for gifting during Ramadan and Eid, coupled with the influx of tourists in Dubai and Abu Dhabi malls, contributes to a balanced demand profile. This profile effectively combines everyday snacking preferences with high-margin seasonal sales peaks, showcasing the diverse consumer base and evolving market dynamics in the United Arab Emirates.

United Arab Emirates Chocolate Market Trends and Insights

Increasing Demand for Premium and Artisanal Chocolates

Premium chocolate is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of nearly seven percent through 2030, significantly outpacing the mass segment's slower trajectory. This shift is not solely driven by rising disposable incomes-considering the United

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Arab Emirates' high GDP per capita in 2023-but rather reflects the growing consumer preference for experiential retail and the appeal of provenance storytelling. In a strategic move, Lindt introduced its limited-edition "Dubai Style Chocolate" bars in Europe during the first half of 2025. Priced at approximately sixteen dollars and with only a thousand bars produced, they sold out within hours, showcasing Lindt's ability to effectively leverage scarcity to drive demand. Meanwhile, Patchi, a key player in the market, has not only revamped its boutique at Mercato Mall but is also developing a massive GCC Experience Centre. This facility will feature personalization kiosks, foster business-to-business partnerships, and incorporate sustainability narratives, focusing on solar energy and recycling. The growth of the premium chocolate segment depends on retailers' ability to justify significant price premiums over mass brands. This can be achieved through transparent sourcing, exclusive product runs, and strong cultural connections-an edge that benefits established luxury brands and agile local artisans, rather than mid-tier multinational companies.

Rise of Gift-Giving and Luxury Packaging During Festivals

Seasonal gifting during Ramadan and Eid led to a significant 150% increase in sales and a remarkable 203.7% growth in gross merchandise value in 2025, with confectionery and pastries accounting for 20.4% of all gifting transactions on platforms such as Flowwow . A consumer survey conducted in 2025 in Saudi Arabia-relevant to the United Arab Emirates due to shared cultural and demographic characteristics-revealed that 50% of respondents planned to increase their spending on chocolate, dates, and sweets during Ramadan, while 45% intended to purchase these items as gifts for Eid. However, this strong focus on seasonal demand introduces inventory challenges for retailers. Businesses must forecast demand 4 to 6 months in advance to secure essential packaging materials and imported chocolates. Any errors in these projections can result in excess inventory, leading to post-festival markdowns that erode annual profit margins. Furthermore, self-gifting witnessed a 15% year-on-year growth in the first half of 2024, reflecting a broader trend of premiumization extending beyond traditional occasions. Despite this, handmade chocolates ranked lower than flowers and balloons in self-gifting preferences, suggesting an opportunity to reposition these products as appealing options for personal indulgence.

Stringent Food Safety Regulations and Sugar Limitations

Abu Dhabi's Nutri-Mark front-of-pack labeling, which will become mandatory from June 2025, assigns A-to-E grades based on the levels of sugar, sodium, and saturated fat in food products . This initiative is particularly focused on the confectionery segment, where sugar content often exceeds 35 grams per 100 grams. As a result, mass-market milk chocolate bars are at risk of receiving D or E ratings, which could discourage health-conscious consumers from purchasing these products and lead retailers to reduce shelf space for items with lower ratings. Furthermore, Federal Law No. 10/2015 on Food Safety, along with heavy-metals regulations set to take effect in October 2024, establishes maximum residue limits for cadmium and lead in cocoa products. Importers will be required to provide batch-level certificates of analysis, which could increase compliance costs, particularly for smaller distributors. Additionally, Dubai Municipality's Montaji system mandates that imported chocolates must retain at least 50% of their shelf life upon entry into the United Arab Emirates, with a minimum of 6 months remaining. This regulation significantly compresses supply-chain timelines for European and Swiss imports, which typically require 8 to 12 weeks for sea freight.

Other drivers and restraints analyzed in the detailed report include:

Expansion of E-Commerce and Online Retail Channels
Growing Health Consciousness Boosting Dark, Vegan, and Sugar-Free Chocolate
Fluctuations in Ingredient Quality Due to Global Supply Issues

For complete list of drivers and restraints, kindly check the Table Of Contents.

Segment Analysis

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Milk and white chocolate accounted for a 56.12% market share in 2025, primarily driven by the popularity of mass-market brands such as Galaxy, Cadbury Dairy Milk, and Snickers. However, dark chocolate is emerging as a strong contender, with a projected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.51% through 2031, outpacing the segment's growth by 220 basis points. This growth reflects a shift in consumer preferences, particularly among health-conscious expatriates and affluent Emiratis in the United Arab Emirates, who are increasingly drawn to chocolate with 70% or higher cocoa content. These products are often marketed for their antioxidant benefits and low-sugar formulations, catering to a growing demand for healthier indulgence options. Despite this positive trend, regulatory clarity under Federal Law No. 10/2015, which governs food safety and standards, remains limited, posing challenges for manufacturers and marketers in the region.

Mirzam, a premium chocolate brand, has capitalized on this trend by offering single-origin dark chocolate bars sourced from Vietnam, Madagascar, and Papua New Guinea. These bars are priced between AED 34 and AED 634 (USD 9-173), reflecting their premium positioning in the market. Mirzam emphasizes a bean-to-bar production process and incorporates storytelling inspired by the historic Spice Route, which resonates with consumers seeking authenticity and quality. This approach has enabled the brand to justify price premiums of 5 to 10 times over mass-market chocolate brands, highlighting the growing willingness of consumers in the United Arab Emirates to pay for unique and high-quality chocolate experiences.

Tablets and bars accounted for a 39.05% market share in 2025, underscoring their widespread appeal in impulse purchases, supermarket checkouts, and vending machines. These formats have become a staple for consumers seeking convenience and accessibility. Meanwhile, pralines and truffles are projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.76% through 2031, reflecting a growing consumer preference for experiential products and gifting options that offer a sense of indulgence and personalization. This shift highlights the evolving dynamics of consumer behavior in the confectionery market.

The "Dubai chocolate" trend, featuring pistachio-filled and kunafa-infused bars, originated with local artisan FIX Dessert Chocolatier in the United Arab Emirates in 2021. This trend gained viral popularity in December 2023 and has since expanded globally, reaching renowned brands such as Lindt, Costco, Trader Joe's, and IHOP. Molded blocks, while occupying a niche position often associated with corporate gifting and hotel amenities, face growth challenges due to limited differentiation and competition from tablets. However, premium offerings in this segment, such as Bateel's date-filled chocolates and Patchi's personalized gift boxes, continue to cater to consumers seeking high-quality, luxurious options.

The United Arab Emirates Chocolate Market Report is Segmented by Product Type (Dark Chocolate and Milk and White Chocolate), Form (Tablets and Bars, Molded Blocks and More), Price Form (Mass and Premium), Ingredient Type (Dairy-Based, Plant-Based and More) and Distribution Channels (Supermarket/Hypermarket, Online Retail Store and More). The Market Forecasts are Provided in Terms of Value (USD) and Volume (tonnes).

List of Companies Covered in this Report:

Mars, Incorporated Ferrero International S.A. Mondelez International, Inc. Nestle SA Patchi Industrial Company S.A.L. Y?Id?z Holding AS Chocoladefabriken Lindt & Sprungli AG Bateel International LLC Al Nassma Chocolate LLC Mirzam Chocolate Makers LLC Best Food Company LLC Barry Callebaut AG The Hershey Company IFFCO Group Gandour Neuhaus NV/SA Debailleul SA Forrey & Galland LLC Co Chocolat Zokolat FZE

Additional Benefits:

 The market estimate (ME) sheet in Excel format
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