

## Why it's "*pain au chocolat*" and not "chocolate croissant" *chez nous* at our shop.

We notice some customers are asking for "chocolate croissant" vs "*pain au chocolat*." Is there a difference? Well, *oui*. "Chocolate croissant" is actually a misnomer. Unless it is a chocolate croissant. Let me explain.

It may have been American companies who got that party started. Influenced by the migration and mass production of croissants and *pain au chocolat* into North American markets, some enterprising factories and bakeries stuck a piece of chocolate into a croissant and called it a "chocolate croissant" which technically then, it is, right? Done that way, it saves the cost of extra dough and chocolate so it became a cheaper pastry to make.

An authentic French *pain au chocolat* however, is not made in a croissant shape. It is made with more dough in a roll shape with two sticks of dark chocolate and not just one (especially created in Europe for this function); quite unlike its imposter. Croissant means 'crescent' in English. A *pain au chocolat* is not a crescent. Also *pain au chocolat* directly translates into 'chocolate bread' which it is neither. Still with me?

Ever see the kinda lame movie *It's Complicated*? (The bakery scene is painfully on Youtube. Meryl Streep must've been short on cash in 2009 but I digress). This scene is of course not realistic as it takes hours to make the croissant dough (used for the classical French pastries in the *viennoiserie* family we specialize in of *croissants*, *pain au chocolat* and *pain aux raisins*) as it must rest and rise - think sourdough bread but much more difficult - in order to develop all those fabulous flakey layers but hey - since when has fact ever gotten in the way of a good (or bad) story? Good things take time.

It could be considered a cultural thing too, yes? One doesn't call *lasagna* "pasta casserole." It has a proper name with a specific ethnic origin and authenticity from Italy. If we can say *lasagna* and not "lass-ag-na" surely we can manage *pain au chocolat*? We all know it's important to be respectful of different cultures. Appreciating a culture's food is part of that. It really comes down to a sign of respect. People can even call *pain au chocolat* "*chocolatine*" which is what most of the southwest of France call them as well as many Quebecers. In France, they may not actually care what tourists call *pain au chocolat* as most of these pastries in France are now industrially made.

So you can see how chocolate croissant has ended up becoming synonymous for the original French *pain au chocolat* even when it really isn't. And you can now appreciate how we like to rock it old school by dedicating ourselves to creating handmade traditional *pain au chocolat* with a character and taste of how Pascal remembers them 30 years ago.

Interested in authenticity, something splendid, as well as value for your money? Seek out a genuine master artisan dedicated to their heritage craft and pay homage to a classic French pastry and the skill it takes to make by asking for *pain au chocolat*. Your best bet is to go by what the establishment calls it on their menu and order that. Passion for the essence of the exceptional lives in the hearts of a French expat dedicated to his *métier* and his storytelling partner. Dedicated to excellence, from the selection of ingredients especially the flour as well as the preservation of his craftsmanship, they care deeply about the noble provenance of this pervasive but so commonly misunderstood genre of endangered pastry, and so beg to differ. *Vive la différence* with us!



Photo credit: happy customer. Not the dog. Doggos can't have choco. That's why the sad eyes. A tiny bit of the pastry should be alright though but then you'll be "hounded" for more, ha ha!