

History of Cacao

Cocoa and other chocolate products are enjoyed by billions of people around the globe, but surprisingly few people know the history of the confection. In fact, cocoa has appeared in different cultures worldwide for hundreds of years.

Cocoa was first developed as a crop in many ancient South American cultures. Cacao residues on pottery in Ecuador suggest that the plant was consumed by humans as early as 5,000 years ago. Chemical analysis of residue extracted from pottery excavated at an archaeological site at Puerto Escondido, in Honduras, indicates that cocoa products were first consumed there sometime between 1500 and 1400 BC.

It was widely cultivated more than 3,000 years ago by the Maya, Toltec, and Aztec peoples, who prepared a beverage from the bean (sometimes using it as a ceremonial drink) and also used the bean as a currency.





The modern word “chocolate” stems from two words in Nahuatl, the language spoken by many native groups: chocolatl, which translated literally means “hot water,” and cacahuatl, which referred to a bitter beverage made with cocoa that was shared during religious ceremonies.

Christopher Columbus took cocoa beans to Spain after his fourth voyage in 1502, and the Spanish conquistadores, arriving in Mexico in 1519, were introduced to a chocolate beverage by the Aztec. The Aztec beverage was made from sun-dried shelled beans, probably fermented in their pods.

The broken kernels, or nibs, were roasted in earthen pots and then ground to a paste in a concave stone, called a metate, over a small fire. Vanilla and various spices and herbs were added, and corn (maize) was sometimes used to produce milder flavour. The paste, formed into small cakes, was cooled and hardened on shiny leaves placed under a tree.

Too bitter for European taste, the mixture was sweetened with sugar when introduced to the Spanish court.

The Spanish could not hold onto their secret forever, and chocolate quickly spread across the rest of western Europe.

it reached Italy in 1606, became popular in France with the marriage of the Spanish princess Maria Theresa to Louis XIV in 1660.

In 1657- Hot chocolate was hailed by the upper classes as both delicious and healthy, and cocoa ultimately gained the reputation of being an aphrodisiac.

By 1765 chocolate manufacture had begun in the American colonies at Dorchester, in Massachusetts, using cocoa beans from the West Indies.

- In 1828 C.J. van Houten of the Netherlands patented a process for obtaining “chocolate powder” by pressing much of the cocoa butter from ground and roasted cocoa beans.

- In 1847 the English firm of Fry and Sons combined cocoa butter, a by-product of the pressing, with chocolate liquor and sugar to produce eating chocolate



- 1876 Daniel Peter of Switzerland added dried milk to make milk chocolate.

Cacao trees grow in a limited geographical zone, of about 20° to the north and south of the Equator. Nearly 70% of the world crop today is grown in West Africa. The cacao plant was first given its botanical name by Swedish natural scientist Carl Linnaeus in his original classification of the plant kingdom, where he called it *Theobroma* ("food of the gods") cacao.



Fair Trade

Fair trade cocoa producer groups are established in Belize, Bolivia, Cameroon, the Congo, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Haiti, India, Ivory Coast, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Sierra Leone, and São Tomé and Príncipe. In 2016 it was reported that the chocolate producer Ferrero would further invest in fair trade in cocoa; the plan was to double the amount of cocoa originating from fair trade in the following three years. Ferrero wanted to invest in 40,000 MT of fair trade cocoa until 2020. As of 2014, less than 1% of the chocolate market was fair trade. Cadbury, one of the world's largest chocolate companies, has begun certifying its Dairy Milk bars as fair trade; according to Cadbury, as of 2010, one quarter of global sales of chocolate bars will be fair trade. In 2007, the United States imported approximately 1.95 million pounds of fairly traded cocoa. In order to purpose a sustainable and responsible coffee-production, established 1997 the Dutch coffee roaster Ahold Coffee Company in cooperation with coffeefarmers, the UTZ Certified-programme. To achieve this, they created the utz-certificate, which includes the counteracting against child labor and the exploitation of the workers. To receive this certificate, the included farm/company needs to follow a code of conduct in relation to social and environmental friendly factors. Furthermore, the UTZ-program focuses on an improvement of farming methods to increase the profits and salaries of farmers and distributors on site.

UTZ Code of Conduct:

- Children younger than 15 are not employed in any form.
- Children younger than 18 do not conduct heavy or hazardous work, or any that could jeopardize their physical, mental or moral well-being.
- On small scale/family run farms, children are allowed to help their families, but only if: the work does not interfere with schooling; it's not physically demanding or hazardous; an adult relative always accompanies the child.
- No forced, bonded or trafficked labor is allowed in any shape or form.

In 2012 Mondelez International launched the Cocoa Life program to improve the cocoa supply chain by investing \$400 million in the following ten years. Approximately \$100 million of the money was to be spent for the cocoa supply chain in Ivory Coast, \$100 million would be dedicated to Ghana and the remaining \$200 million was to be shared between Brazil, Dominican Republic and India. The company was not only investigating the purchase of certificated cocoa, but looking to focus more on direct investment in the cocoa supply chain. The Cocoa Life program advocates for higher incomes for farmers, authorization, inspiring young people and conserving the environment.

Cacao & Cocoa

What are the differences

If you're looking to purchase chocolate, you've probably noticed some packages say they contain cocoa while others say cacao.

In certain cases, the variations between these products are important. Many times the only difference can be the distributors chosen marketing lingo.

Some experts use “cacao” for the pods, beans and ground-up contents of the beans, reserving “cocoa” for the powder left after pressing the fat out of the ground beans (Emmanuel Ohene Afoakwa). Makers of raw (unroasted) or less processed cacao bean products often use the word cacao rather than cocoa, which may imply that they’re more natural products.

Cacao products — such as unsweetened cocoa powder, nibs and dark chocolate — are rich sources of minerals. Minimally processed, raw cacao products contain little or no added sugar and are higher in antioxidants than more highly processed products.

Cacao products are rich sources of minerals, such as unsweetened cocoa powder, nibs and dark chocolate. Minimally processed, raw cacao products contain little or no added sugar and are higher in antioxidants than products that are more highly processed.

To conclude, there is variation in using "cacao" and "cocoa" on chocolate goods. Fresh cacao products — made from fermented, raw, unroasted cocoa beans — are usually less refined and safer.