



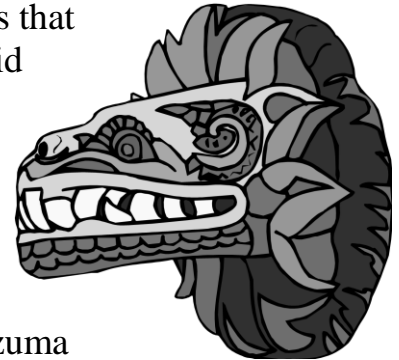
Chocolate's History

Chocolate Earliest Record

The cacao tree is a curious sight, with its large pods protruding from the branches and trunks. The cacao tree must have attracted the curiosity of the Mayan and Olmec inhabitants of the rain forests of Central America around the 1st century A.D. The Mayans may have raised the tree on plantations as early as 500 A.D. Mayans first planted cacao seeds in the Yucatan, Mexico, in 600 A.D. when they moved from their original home in Guatemala. Chocolate remains from Mayan pottery have been found in Guatemala. The Mayans fermented, roasted, and crushed the beans to bring out the chocolate flavor. Then they added the beans to water, flavored it with red pepper and vanilla (but no sugar) and made a chocolate drink. It was and is very spicy!

Cocoa Moves to the Aztec World

The Aztecs arrived in Mexico in the 1300s A.D. and controlled the area until the 1500s A.D. Like the Mayans, they also crushed and roasted cacao beans to prepare a peppery drink without sugar. Called chocolatl (chock-oh-LAH-tul), this drink was consumed by wealthy people and royalty. Common people used cacao as a flavoring in a food prepared from corn meal. Cacao beans were so valuable to the Aztecs that they used them as currency (money). Each Aztec citizen paid taxes in cocoa beans.



For hundreds of years chocolate was enjoyed only as a very bitter, royal drink. Emperor Montezuma served it to his Spanish guests. Montezuma was said to be so fond of chocolate that 50 pitchers were prepared each day for his personal consumption and 2,000 more for his court. Montezuma built up massive amounts of cacao in various forms as required payment from the tribes he conquered. When Cortes arrived in Tenochtitlan (present-day Mexico City), one of his men estimated that Montezuma had 2 million pounds of cacao beans in one of his warehouses.

Chocolate Travels to Spain

Christopher Columbus laid before the feet of King Ferdinand many new and wondrous foods upon his return to Spain from the 1492 voyage. These foods included corn, potatoes, tomatoes, beans of all types, peppers, squash and a few little, bitter, brown beans. The beans were not thought of highly. It was left to Hernando Cortes, while invading Mexico in the early 1500s, to discover the pleasures of the Aztec drink chocolatl and return with it, the cacao beans, and the Aztec recipe. The Spaniards did not like the new drink until someone added sugar. Charles V planted a cacao plantation in Spain.

Cortes took beans back with him to plant when he sailed to Haiti and Trinidad in the West Indies and Fernando Po, an island off Africa's west coast. For many years, the Spanish monks were entrusted to keep the recipe secret as they fermented, cured and roasted the cacao beans into cocoa.

Europe Learns of Chocolate

When the secret was finally revealed chocolate spread quickly through Europe in the 17th century. In 1606, an Italian merchant named Antonio Carletti brought chocolate from Spain to Italy. Spain controlled the supply of cacao beans until about 1700. From there,



cocoa made its way to Holland, then Spain, then France and on to England by the mid-1600s. In 1657, English Chocolate Houses opened, serving the delicious beverage to wealthy citizens with food, gambling, and lively conversation. The French began cacao cultivation on the West Indian island of

Martinique in 1660 and in Brazil in 1677. (Martinique is part of the Lesser Antilles in the West Indies.) Chocolate appeared in Switzerland and Germany in 1697 and in Austria in 1711. The English added milk to chocolate in 1700. Until this time all of the work to process chocolate was done by grinding the beans by hand and mixing the ingredients by hand as well.

Chocolate Arrives Back in America

The North American colonies were slower to adopt the new food because chocolate imported from Europe was outrageously expensive. Although a Boston apothecary was advertising chocolate for sale in 1712, it was not until 1755 that colonists went into the chocolate business for themselves. In 1765, John Hannon, an Irish chocolate maker, started a business with Dr. James Baker of Massachusetts to import cacao beans to the American colonies directly from the Caribbean islands. This reduced the cost. From then on chocolate grew in popularity and economic importance. When Hannon was lost at sea in 1770, Baker took over the company, which still bears his name and produces chocolate products used in baking.

New Forms of Processing Chocolate

In 1828, a Dutch firm manufactured the first chocolate powder. This powder consisted of cacao with two-thirds of the fat removed. Fry and Sons, an English firm, developed the first chocolate in solid form in 1847. Daniel Peter and Henri Nestle, both Swiss, improved the Fry and Sons method of chocolate production by adding concentrated milk to sweet chocolate; creating milk chocolate in 1875. Both companies made bars of the cocoa butter removed from the cacao beans to make powdered chocolate. These bars were the forerunners of today's chocolate bars.

Production in the Tropics

Countries began to establish cacao plantations to meet the demand for chocolate beginning in the 1880s. The Dutch started operations in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Java, and Sumatra; the Belgians in the Congo; the Germans in Cameroon; the French in Madagascar; the Portuguese in Sao Tome and Principe, twin islands off the west coast of Africa; and the English in the area of the West Indies.

Importance to the United States

The Industrial Revolution made mass production of chocolate by machines possible. Chocolate rapidly became an American favorite. During World War II, the American military recognized the importance of chocolate for its soldiers and allocated shipping space on incoming transports for cacao beans, and outgoing candy bars. A pocket chocolate bar could be counted on for fast energy, if needed, or traded to local citizens wherever U.S. military personnel were found. To provide chocolate that wouldn't melt in their hands, M & M's were created. Today, three, 4-ounce chocolate bars are included in the U.S. army's D-rations. Chocolate even went into space with the astronauts.

Today's Production

At the beginning of the 21st century four countries in West Africa led the world in cacao production: Ghana, Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire), Nigeria, and Cameroon. South American countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean harvest the second-largest crop. Malaysia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea are also significant producers. Cacao plantations can also be found in Mexico, Trinidad, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Haiti, New Guinea, Samoa, and Java. Mexico contributes only about 2 percent of the total world crop.

The industry has set up Cocoa Exchanges similar to a stock exchange in cities such as New York, London, Hamburg and Amsterdam. It is here that the price for the world's chocolate is set; as future contracts in cacao (cocoa) are traded.

Each company has its own secrets for roasting, processing and combining chocolate with their recipe of ingredients. These secrets are closely guarded and result in a wide array of wonderful chocolate products for human consumption.

