



Bite-sized Facts About Chocolate



The Cacao Tree



All the chocolate we eat comes from one plant – the *Theobroma cacao* tree. These trees produce pods containing pulp-covered seeds. The seeds, once fermented and dried, are processed into chocolate.

- Cacao trees grow beneath the shady branches of taller trees in the rainforest
- They don't begin to bear fruit until they are at least three to five years old
- Cacao trees produce flowers all year round
- Tiny flies called midges pollinate these small flowers
- Eventually, cacao pods will sprout from the trunk and branches of the tree
- Cacao midges have the fastest wingbeat of any creature on earth – 1000 beats per second
- Cacao midges are so small that they fit easily on the head of a straight pin
- A cacao pod contains 30-50 almond sized seeds known as cacao beans. One cacao pod contains enough beans to make approximately seven milk chocolate bars



The Mayans

Before chocolate was eaten as a sweet, it was a spicy drink. Some of the earliest known chocolate drinkers (250 – 900 AD) were the ancient Mayans of Central America.

The Mayans gathered cacao seeds from rainforest trees and planted them in household gardens. They plucked the pods, scooped



out the seeds, and using a stone, they ground them into chocolate. They mixed chocolate with cornmeal, chilli peppers, honey, and water.



Mayan priests presented a chocolate drink at sacred altars during special religious ceremonies. When rich Mayans served chocolate they used lavishly decorated cups made by specially trained artists.

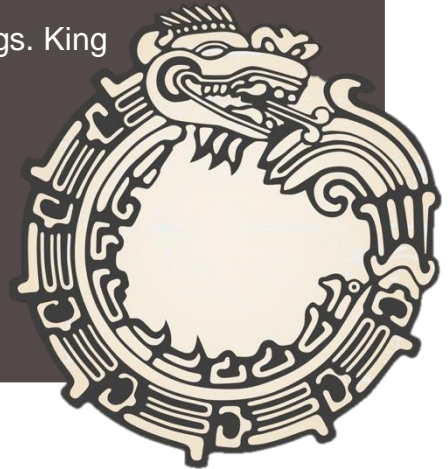
The Aztecs

The ancient Aztecs got their taste for chocolate from their Mayan neighbours. From 1200 cacao played a key role in the vast trade empire of the Aztec people. Cacao wouldn't grow on Aztec land, so Aztec traders travelled to Mayan country to buy the precious seeds.

Cacao seeds were used as money when shopping at the market for food, clothes, and even kitchen tools and utensils. Some dishonest merchants made counterfeit cacao seeds too!

Chocolate was a special drink reserved only for wealthy Aztecs or kings. King Montezuma is reported to have drunk 50 goblets of chocolate a day.

The Aztecs presented offerings of cacao to their god Quetzalcoatl, who is often depicted as a feathered serpent.



The Spanish

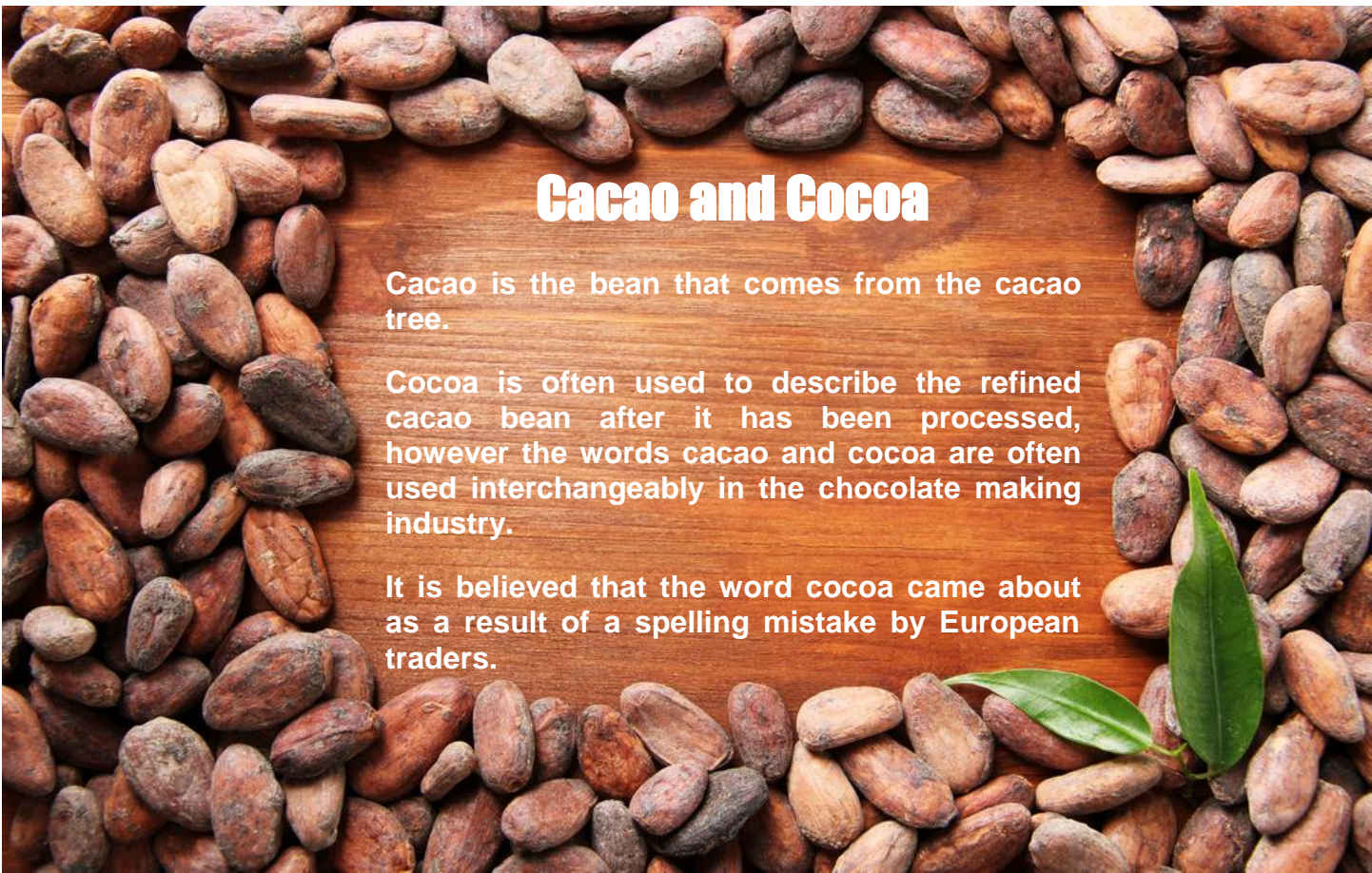
In 1521, the Spanish explorer Hernán Cortés led an army to conquer the Aztec empire. The Spanish victors carried many treasures back home with them, including cacao seeds and the Aztec recipe for the drink. Within 100 years the popularity of hot chocolate spread to the rest of Europe.

The Spanish invented a wooden stirring stick called a molinillo to whip their chocolate into a froth. They also added sugar to sweeten the bitter taste.



Like the Aztecs, Europeans created special serving dishes for drinking chocolate. In fact saucers were invented specifically to keep chocolate from spilling on fine clothes.

Chocolate houses became popular places in 17th century Europe to socialise and drink chocolate. Wealthy people drank chocolate for breakfast. It was considered the height of good breeding to lie in bed and leisurely sip a cup of hot cocoa.



Cacao and Cocoa

Cacao is the bean that comes from the cacao tree.

Cocoa is often used to describe the refined cacao bean after it has been processed, however the words cacao and cocoa are often used interchangeably in the chocolate making industry.

It is believed that the word cocoa came about as a result of a spelling mistake by European traders.



A Bar of Chocolate

By the 1800s new processes made it possible to create solid bars of chocolate for eating, not just liquid chocolate for drinking. New inventions, machines, and mass production made chocolate affordable and not just a luxury for the rich.

The steam driven chocolate mill, invented in 1732, made it easier and faster to grind cacao seeds and cheaply produce large amounts of chocolate. In 1828 Dutchman Coenraad Johannes van Houten invented the chocolate press. Still used today, this machine squeezes out cocoa butter and makes it possible to produce solid chocolate as well as cocoa powder.

In 1847 the Fry & Sons Company of Bristol introduced the first chocolate bar meant to be eaten as a snack.



Chocolate in Ghana

It is thought that cacao first arrived in Ghana in 1876, brought there by Ghanaian agriculturalist Tetteh Quarshie. It is thought that Quarshie was encouraged and supported by others including Sir William Brandford Griffith (1858-1939).

From Ghana, then known as the Gold Coast, cocoa beans were dispensed to other countries including Nigeria. From 1911-1976 Ghana was the world's leading coco producer supplying chocolate for most of the growing European market.

The Divine Chocolate Story: Ghanaian cocoa growers pooled resources to set up Kuapa Kokoo, a farmers' cooperative. Kuapa Kokoo trades its own cocoa in order to get a better price on the market for cocoa sold and to improve the farmers' standard of living.

At a meeting in 1997 the farmers decided to create a chocolate bar of their own. With the support of Twin Trading, Comic Relief, the Body Shop and others, the farmers set up Day Chocolate, which later became known as Divine Chocolate.

The fact that the farmers own a significant share of the company is a first in the fair trade world. Fair trade means farmers are paid a price that covers the cost of producing the cocoa and gives them the security of a long term trading contract.

Kuapa Kokoo's motto is 'pa pa paa' which means 'the best of the best'. You get the best of the best chocolate and the cocoa farmers get a fair and secure price for their crop.





Chocolate in York

One of York's most famous sons is Joseph Rowntree, a Quaker remembered for his work towards improving conditions of working people and founding the famous Rowntrees chocolate and confectionary company. In 1827 he set up a grocer's shop, which in time expanded into a chocolate factory, and now many of the sweets and chocolate bars that are much loved in Britain, like Kit Kat and Yorkie, are manufactured in the York factory.

York's other great chocolate name is Terry's. The firm began in 1767. The Terry's name first appeared when Joseph Terry became a partner in 1823. At peak seasons over 700 people were employed at the plant to produce world-renowned delights such as Terry's All Gold. The York factory closed in 2005 and moved its operation to Poland.

Useful websites for further research:

Fair Trade Foundation

www.fairtrade.org.uk

Kuapa Kokoo

<http://kuapakokoo.com>

Pa Pa Paa

www.papapaa.org

Divine Chocolate

www.divinechocolate.com

Traidcraft

www.traidcraft.co.uk

Oxfam's Fair Trade Resource

www.oxfam.org.uk/~media/Files/Education/Resources/Explore%20Fairtrade/Fair%20trade%20action%20guide%20for%20young%20people.ashx

York's Sweet Story

<http://yorkschocolatestory.com>

International Cocoa Initiative

www.cocoainitiative.org

Kuapa Kokoo Report on Child Labour

www.fairtrade.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2010/k/kuapokokoo.pdf

This resource was created for the *Me and the Chocolate Factory* short story competition. Below are the websites of the partners and organisations involved in the competition:

Centre for Applied Human Rights

www.york.ac.uk/cahr

Human Writes City Blog

<http://humanwritescity.wordpress.com>

Amnesty International

www.amnesty.org.uk/youth

Centre for Global Education

www.centreforglobaleducation.org

Partners

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*



Education for a just future



Funders



The Leverhulme Trust

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JOSEPH
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CHARITABLE
TRUST

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JRF

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