

## Ten Fun Facts About Chocolate

I will bet you didn't know this about chocolate!

10 fun facts about the world's favourite treat.

1. Chocolate comes from a fruit tree; it's made from a seed.
2. It takes 400 cocoa beans to make one pound of chocolate.
3. Each cacao tree produces approximately 2,500 beans.
4. Cacao beans were so valuable to early Mesoamericans that they were used as currency.
5. "Cacao" is how you say "cocoa" in Spanish.
6. A farmer must wait four to five years for a cacao tree to produce its first beans.
7. Spanish royalty gave cakes of cacao in their dowries.
8. *Theobroma Cacao* is the tree that produces cocoa beans, and it means "food of the gods." Carolus Linnaeus, the father of plant taxonomy, named it.
9. Chocolate has over 600 flavour compounds while red wine has just 200.
10. Chocolate milk is an effective post work-out recovery drink

# 20 Things You Never Knew About Chocolate

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## 1. THERE ARE MULTIPLE CELEBRATIONS OF CHOCOLATE EACH YEAR.

Holiday makers are constantly on the hunt for a reason to munch on chocolate, so the calendar offers plenty of excuses to buy a bar. July 7 is also Chocolate Day, a nod to the historical tradition that the day marks when chocolate was first brought to Europe on July 7, 1550, though a number of sources argue that it might have hit the continent's shores as far back as 1504, thanks to Christopher Columbus. Official day or not, we do know that chocolate first arrived in Europe some time in the 16th century. There's also National Milk Chocolate Day on July 28, International Chocolate Day on September 13, and, of course, National Bittersweet Chocolate With Almonds Day on November 7.

## 2. CHOCOLATE IS ACTUALLY A VEGETABLE—KIND OF.

Milk and dark chocolate come from the cacao bean, which grows on the cacao tree (*Theobroma cacao*), an evergreen from the family *Malvaceae* (other members of the family include okra and cotton). This makes the most important part of the sweet treat a vegetable.

## 3. WHITE CHOCOLATE IS NOT CHOCOLATE.

Because it doesn't contain cocoa solids or chocolate liquor, white chocolate isn't chocolate in the strict sense. But it does contain parts of the cacao bean—mainly cocoa butter.

## 4. THE CACAO BEAN IS NATIVE TO MEXICO AND BOTH CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA.

It's believed that inhabitants of these areas first started cultivating the bean as far back as 1250 BCE, and perhaps even earlier.

## **5. HOT CHOCOLATE WAS THE FIRST CHOCOLATE TREAT.**

Cacao was brewed in both Mexican and Aztec culture, though the result was nothing like today's hot chocolate—it was a typically bitter concoction that was often used for ceremonial occasions like weddings.

## **6. MARIE ANTOINETTE LOVED HOT CHOCOLATE (THE MODERN KIND).**

Marie didn't just love cake, she also loved chocolate, and hot chocolate was frequently served at the Palace of Versailles. It wasn't just the taste everyone loved—it was also believed that the drink was an aphrodisiac.

## **7. CACAO WAS ONCE USED AS CURRENCY.**

The Aztecs loved and valued the cacao bean so highly that they used it as currency during the height of their civilization.

## **8. SPANISH FRIARS HELPED SPREAD THE LOVE.**

After cacao and chocolate were introduced to Europe, traveling Spanish friars took it to various monasteries, handily spreading it around the continent.

## **9. A PAIR OF BRITISH CONFECTIONERS INVENTED SOLID CHOCOLATE.**

The Fry and Sons shop concocted what they called “eating chocolate” in 1847 by combining cocoa butter, sugar, and chocolate liquor. This was a grainy, solid form of the treat.

## **10. COCOA AND CACAO ARE THE SAME THING.**

The words are interchangeable! It's all one bean.

## **11. NAPOLEON LOVED CHOCOLATE.**

The French leader demanded that wine and chocolate be made available to him and his senior advisers even during intense military campaigns.

## **12. BAKER'S CHOCOLATE ISN'T JUST FOR BAKING.**

Dr. James Baker and John Hannon founded their chocolate company—later called Walter Baker Chocolate—in 1765. That's where the term "Baker's Chocolate" comes from, not to denote chocolate that's just meant for cooking.

## **13. MILTON HERSHEY REALLY WAS A CANDY KING.**

The Pennsylvania native may be best known for starting The Hershey Chocolate Company in good old Hershey, PA, but he got his start in candy long before hooking up with chocolate. He founded his first company, The Lancaster Caramel Company, when he was 30 years old.

## **14. MILK CHOCOLATE WAS INVENTED IN SWITZERLAND.**

Daniel Peter created the tasty treat in 1875—after eight years of trying to make his recipe work. Condensed milk ended up being the key ingredient.

## **15. MAKING CHOCOLATE IS HARD WORK.**

Despite its regal background and revered status, the cacao bean doesn't just magically turn into chocolate—it takes about 400 beans to make a single pound of the good stuff.

## **16. THE FIRST CHOCOLATE BAR WAS MADE IN ENGLAND.**

Way back in 1842, the Cadbury company made the very first chocolate bar. The company is still in existence, and is perhaps most famous for their delightful Easter-themed treats.

## **17. MOST CACAO IS NOW GROWN IN AFRICA.**

Despite its Amazonian roots, most cacao—nearly 70 percent of the world's supply—comes from Africa. The Ivory Coast is the largest single producer, providing about 30 percent of all the world's cacao.

## **18. CACAO TREES CAN LIVE TO BE 200 YEARS OLD.**

That may sound impressive, but the tropical beauties only make viable cacao beans for just 25 years of their lifespan.

## **19. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF CACAO.**

Most modern chocolate comes from forastero beans, which are considered easy to grow—though the crillo bean is believed to make much tastier chocolate.

## **20. CHOCOLATE HAS A SPECIAL MELTING POINT.**

Chocolate is the only edible substance to melt around 93° F, just below the human body temperature. That's why chocolate melts so easily on your tongue.

## Chocolate Facts

The scientific name for the tree that chocolate comes from, *Theobroma cacao*, means “**food of the gods.**”

**The smell of chocolate** increases theta brain waves, which triggers relaxation. Chocolate has over **600 flavour compounds**, while red [wine](#) has 200. It takes approximately 400 cacao beans to make one pound (450 gr.) of chocolate.

Chocolate is the only edible substance to melt around **32°C ( 90°F)**, just below human body temperature. That’s why chocolate melts in your mouth.

Candy bars generally have less than 10 milligrams of **caffeine**, but the darker the chocolate, the higher the caffeine content.

According to the International Cocoa Organization, **Europeans account for almost half the world’s chocolate consumption.** They estimate the average Brit, Swiss, or German eat 11 kilograms (24 pounds) of chocolate a year.

In celebration of its 100th birthday, Thorntons created **the world’s largest chocolate bar** – weighing a record breaking **5,792.50 kilograms** (12,770 pounds).

The English chocolate company Cadbury made **the first chocolate bar in the world in 1842.**

The inventor of the Chocolate Chip Cookie sold the idea to Nestle Toll House in return for **a lifetime supply of chocolate.**

**M&Ms** were created in 1941 as a means for soldiers to enjoy chocolate without it melting.

**Nutella** was invented during WWII, when an Italian [pastry](#) maker mixed [hazelnuts](#) into chocolate to extend his cocoa supply.

So many **Toblerone** bars are sold each year that, if they were to be laid end to end, they would go on for **62,000 kilometers** (38,525 miles) which longer than the circumference of the Earth.

**Milky Way** candy bars are not named after the galaxy. The name came from the malted milkshakes whose flavour they originally intended to mimic.

Known as “**The World’s Most Expensive Chocolate Bar,**” the Wispa Gold Wrapped Bar is offered by Cadbury. It was designed as a marketing campaign to relaunch their brand of caramel chocolate bars, Wispa Gold. But this expensive version is actually wrapped in an edible gold leaf. It cost **\$1,430** per bar.



In 2013, [Belgium](#) issued a limited edition of **chocolate flavoured stamps**.

There is a **rare fourth kind of chocolate** in addition to the classic milk, dark, and white varieties: **blond chocolate**.

White Chocolate isn't technically Chocolate, as it contains no **cocoa solids** or **cocoa liquor**. White "chocolate" contains cocoa butter instead.

Eating dark chocolate every day **reduces the risk of heart disease by one-third**.

Dark chocolate may **improve blood flow and lower blood pressure**.

Dark chocolate is a powerful source of **antioxidants**.

Dark chocolate may also **improve the function of the brain**.



**Theobromine**, the compound in chocolate that makes it poisonous to [dogs](#), can kill a human as well.

A lethal dose of chocolate for a human being is about **10 kilograms** (22 lbs).

The word "**chocolate**" comes from the Aztec word "**xocoatl**," which referred to the bitter, spicy drink the Aztecs made from cacao beans.

**The ancient Maya** are believed to be the first people to regularly grow cacao trees and drink chocolate.

In Mayan times the **cocoa bean was used as currency** as it was considered to be worth more than gold dust. Cultivation of the beans was restricted so the value of cocoa beans as money would not go down.

Contrary to popular belief, **mice actually prefer chocolate over cheese every time!** Mice love sweet smelling food so they would be more tempted by a piece of chocolate than a chunk of cheddar.

**The film Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory was financed by Quaker Oats to promote its new Wonka Bar candy.** This is also why the film is called “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory” instead of “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” like the book it’s based on.