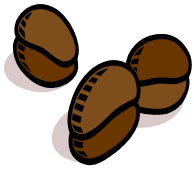


The Story of Chocolate

What's the world's favorite flavor? If you guessed chocolate, you're right. In fact, the average American eats over 11 pounds of chocolate a year! From a tree in the rain forest to the sweet sauce on your ice cream, the story of chocolate is a fascinating one.



Five hundred years ago, hardly anyone in the world had tasted chocolate. Before that, people only had cocoa, which is a powder made from beans that grow on a tree called a cacao. But cocoa beans do not taste good by themselves. They are bitter and turn your mouth brown.

It wasn't until the 1500s that people in Europe learned how to turn cocoa into chocolate. They shelled, roasted and crushed the cocoa beans to make cocoa butter. Then, they heated the cocoa butter to make a thick paste called chocolate liquor. In 1875, Swiss chocolate makers added milk and sugar to liquid chocolate. This was the first milk chocolate. Now it's the most popular chocolate in the world.



In 1847, the J.S. Fry Company in England poured chocolate into square molds, creating the first chocolate bars. But they were bitter and not very popular. In the 1890s the American candy maker Hershey made bars from milk chocolate. Everyone loved them.

Chocolate has come a long way from its beginnings as a bitter-tasting bean. Today, there are over 30,000 kinds of chocolate candies to satisfy your sweet tooth. And if that's not enough, there is even chocolate toothpaste, chocolate pasta, and chocolate soap! Every day, all over the world, people are enjoying the world's favorite flavor.