

lonely planet
food



THE WORLD'S BEST EXPERIENCES

LONELY PLANET'S
GLOBAL
CHOCOLATE
TOUR

FOR CHOCOLATE LOVERS





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Acknowledgements

INTRODUCTION



From camel milk chocolate in Dubai to honeycomb chocolate in Australia, single-origin chocolate ice cream in San Francisco and chocolate-covered blueberries from Trappist Monks in Quebec, the world of chocolate has never been more diverse...or more delectable. Innovative chocolatiers are thinking up novel ingredient combinations from Ho Chi Minh City to Texas and finding new means of sourcing from and supporting small cacao farmers in the race to elevate each bite into chocolate heaven. Yet not every chocolate destination in this book is a craft bean-to-bar maker; beloved Hershey's Chocolate World, chocolate-themed hotels and classic old-world cafes serving famous chocolate cakes all earn a mention as well, and we didn't entirely leave out nostalgic childhood favourites either. Tastes for chocolate vary from region to region, but inventiveness can be found everywhere, alongside old, delicious standbys like chocolate con churros. Or maybe you fancy attending the fashion show at the annual Salon du Chocolat in Paris?

We couldn't cover every worthy Swiss chocolatier or incredible Parisian chocolate boutique, but we included favourites from Lonely Planet writers across the world. The major cacao-growing countries are represented as well, often with tours of cacao farms where it's possible to see the crop as it's grown and harvested. While most production of chocolate is done elsewhere and growers in places like Côte d'Ivoire and Costa Rica primarily export the raw crop without much in-country chocolate production of their own, new bar-makers are popping up all over to challenge the traditional paradigm and capture more of the revenue from the chocolate trade domestically.

Within each of the countries in this book, we've organised the attractions alphabetically by region. Each entry suggests must-try chocolate specialties at the profiled shop, as well as local sights to visit after your tour, tasting or

treat. You'll find pointers on tracking down the best Black Forest cake and discover which chocolate makers are the most serious about ethical sourcing for their cacao. Enjoy!

THE BEANS

For chocolate, it all starts with the bean. Cacao beans grow on trees, and they have a long cultural heritage in certain parts of the world. Today, chocolate is produced across the globe, but it was once reserved for kings and conquerors.

ORIGIN

The cacao bean is the seed from *Theobroma cacao*, a tree that is native to the Brazilian Amazon basin. Cacao has been domesticated for over two millennia, and consumption dates back to the Olmec, Aztec and other major civilisations through the centuries. Prior to the Spanish conquest of the region, cacao beans were often used as currency.

After the arrival of the Spanish, chocolate was introduced to the rest of the world, at first as a drink. It became a popular beverage by the mid-17th century, and the Spanish began introducing the cacao tree across other equatorial growing zones around the world. Its spread would continue in fits and starts for centuries.





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VARIETY

The three main varieties of cacao plant are Forastero, Criollo and Trinitario. Forastero is the most widely used, comprising 80–90% of the world production. Criollo is a rarer and much lower-yield cacao pod and is considered a delicacy due to the low volume it produces. Trinitario is a hybrid between Forastero and Criollo, improving the yields of Criollo while still maintaining its rarity and quality.



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PROCESSING METHOD

Much like coffee, the final product is the result of many involved parties and specific steps. As detailed further on the following pages, turning cacao beans into chocolate is a complex and still mostly manual process. Cacao beans are harvested, fermented, roasted, and then undergo a series of processes to create the right mixture of byproducts that give you the perfectly creamy milk chocolate or slightly bitter dark chocolate you enjoy.

To ensure the highest quality chocolate, many farmers and manufacturers still use few machines in the process.

FLAVOUR PROFILE

If you've ever eaten a cacao bean, you might wonder how something so bitter and astringent could become the world's favourite sweet. Raw cacao beans are slimy from their surrounding pulp and hard, much like eating a nut in its shell. Their flavour is sour and wholly different from the sweet flavours of chocolate. All of the flavour of chocolate we're familiar with comes from the production process.



CACAO TO CHOCOLATE

❶ HARVESTING

On the cacao farm, workers cut the bean pods from trees and split them open to reveal the beans inside. For the most part, this process is still manual to reduce damage to the trees and ensure the highest harvest of cacao beans from each pod.

❷ FERMENTATION

The cacao beans are then left to sit and ferment for 5 to 8 days. This allows the yeasts, bacteria and enzymes in the pulp around each cacao bean to ferment and add flavour to the bean.

❸ DRYING

Following fermentation, the cacao beans are spread out and allowed to dry for between 5 to 12 days. This ends the fermentation process before the beans are shipped to a chocolate manufacturer.

❹ ROASTING

After being shipped from the cacao farm, the cacao beans are sorted and roasted at between 120 and 149°C (250 to 350°F) for 30 to 90 minutes. This is part of what gives the chocolate its colour and flavour.

❺ CRUSHING

The beans are then crushed to release the internal cocoa nib. This nib is the only part of the massive bean pod that's used to create chocolate.

6 GRINDING

The cocoa nibs are ground up to create a brown mixture called cocoa mass. In a solid or semi-solid state, this is also called chocolate liquor. This mixture is roughly 55–60% cocoa butter with particles of cocoa mixed in.

7 PRESSING

The cocoa mass is then pressed to separate the cocoa butter and cocoa powder. Both ingredients are used in the manufacturing of certain types of chocolate in different proportions.

8 MIXING

Depending on the type of chocolate being manufactured, the cocoa butter and cocoa mass are combined in various proportions with other ingredients. See more about this on the following pages.

9 CONCHING

The mixture is stirred continuously for several days to ensure a smooth, even mixture that gives chocolate its creamy consistency.

10 TEMPERING

The chocolate mixture is allowed to cool slowly while still being mixed, then is brought back up to temperature again to make it tempered; this will preserve the chocolate's appearance and keep it shiny.

11 MOULDING

The tempered chocolate is moulded into various shapes for the final product, including chocolate bars, chocolate layers in other sweets, and other shapes. Sometimes the final product after tempering is covered in couverture, a glossy chocolate with a higher cocoa-butter content.

12 PACKAGING

The final chocolate products are packaged and shipped to consumers.

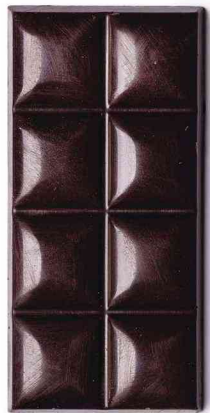
TYPES OF CHOCOLATE

Everyone has their own favourite type of chocolate, and these preferences aren't arbitrary. Whether you prefer the bittersweet flavours of darker chocolates or the creamy smooth sweetness of milk or white chocolate, you're tasting the different proportions of ingredients in each chocolate. Chocolate products are generally comprised of four main ingredients: cocoa butter, cocoa solids, milk and sugars. The proportions of these four ingredients make all the difference in chocolate colour, texture and taste – and why each person prefers their own favourite kind.

🕒 DARK CHOCOLATE

At one end of the spectrum, dark chocolate is the result of mixing cocoa butter and cocoa mass with no additional milk added to make the flavour more creamy or smooth. Also, sugar is added in a lower amount than other flavours of chocolate. This creates a chocolate that is very dark in colour, and has a more brittle, flaky or even chalky texture.

Dark chocolate retains much of the original bitter and roasted flavours of the original cacao bean from the early fermenting and roasting process. Dark chocolate is almost always sold with an indication of the cocoa percentage in it, typically between 70 and 100%, which will help you gauge exactly how bitter the chocolate will be.



BITTERSWEET/SEMISWEET CHOCOLATE

Sometimes, dark chocolate is also called bittersweet or semisweet chocolate to indicate the amount of sugar added to the product during the mixing and conching stages of chocolate production. Typically, bittersweet has less sugar added than semi-sweet chocolate, though this isn't consistent between chocolate manufacturers, and the amount of sugar and cocoa that each manufacturer dubs 'dark,' 'bittersweet' or 'semisweet' can vary. Bittersweet and semisweet chocolate must have at least 35% cocoa in it.



MILK CHOCOLATE

Milk chocolate, as the name suggests, is a chocolate product with added milk. This gives it a rich, creamy and smooth texture. Milk chocolate is also typically far less bitter flavour than dark chocolate, because the milk solids help soften the flavours of the cocoa. Milk chocolate is the most popular type of chocolate produced across North America and Europe.

Milk chocolate in the United States must have a minimum of 20% cocoa in it; in Europe, milk chocolate has a minimum of 25% cocoa in it.



WHITE CHOCOLATE

White chocolate sits at the opposite end of the spectrum from dark chocolate. Unlike dark chocolate which is made of cocoa butter, cocoa solids, and sugar with no milk, white chocolate is made from cocoa butter, sugar, and milk with no cocoa solids. This lack of cocoa solids is why white chocolate is a different colour from all other chocolate products. White chocolate has a similar texture to milk chocolate.

In the United States, there are minimum regulations for the composition of white chocolate: it must be at least 20% cocoa butter, 14% total milk solids and 3.5% milk fat, and no more than 55% sugar. White chocolate is also sometimes flavoured with other ingredients, most commonly vanilla.