

Chocolate



HISTORY, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE

Edited by

Louis Evan Grivetti

University of California
Davis, California

Howard-Yana Shapiro

Mars Incorporated,
and
University of California
Davis, California



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Tlapolcacaualt.



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To our parents and wives:

*Blanche Irene Carpenter Grivetti
Rex Michael Grivetti
Georgette Stylanos Mayerakis Grivetti*

*Pesche Minke Shapiro
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Foreword

The Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa had the right idea when he wrote early in the last century “Look, there’s no metaphysics on earth like chocolate.” Chocolate is a substance long regarded as magical, even supernatural, not to mention salubrious, today for its heart-healthy properties, yesterday because of a solid medicinal reputation as well as an aphrodisiacal one. Chocolate begins as seeds in a pod, that pod the fruit of the cacao tree *Theobroma cacao*. Not incidentally, the scientific name means “drink of the gods,” by way of continuing the metaphysical.

Until relatively recently nobody gave much thought to eating chocolate. Drink was its original use and, despite evidence of an Amazonian origin, Mesoamericans were probably its original users. Cacao was employed in ancient Maya ceremonies and rituals and later used in religious rites to keep alive the memory of Quezalcoatl, the god of the air who made earthly visits from time to time dispensing instructions on how to grow various foods, cacao among them. In addition cacao nibs (the almond-shaped seeds) were put to work as coins so that by the time the Europeans sailed into the New World cacao was well entrenched in all facets of Mesoamerican life: spiritual, nutritional, and financial.

The European phase of cacao’s history dates from 1502 when Columbus, then in the Gulf of Honduras on his forth voyage encountered natives who gave him the drink *xocoatl* made of cacao, honey, spices, and vanilla. The Explorer carried some nibs back to Spain, where they were viewed as curiosities only and it took another introduction in 1528 by Hernando Cortés (the conqueror of Mexico) to establish the plant in Iberia. Before long the Spaniards had figured out how to turn the nibs into an agreeable drink and by 1580 cocoa had achieved widespread popularity among Spain’s elite and its cacao plantations became sources of considerable wealth. As sugar grew cheaper and more readily available in the seventeenth century, chocolate spread across Europe, chocolate houses sprang up and cocoa, although expensive, was charming everyone who could afford it. Doubtless, part of that charm resided in its alleged aphrodisiac properties, and chocolate found its way into confections and was tinkered with as candy.

An international phase of chocolate history was launched in 1819, when the first eating chocolate was produced in Switzerland. In the following decade Cadbury’s Chocolate Company opened in England, the Baker Chocolate Company in the United States, a Dutch chocolate maker produced the world’s first chocolate candy, and an instant cocoa powder was invented. The commercial chocolate industry was born.

If there is little passion in my nutshell early history of chocolate, the same is not true of the pages that follow. They reflect the energy and enthusiasm of the chocolate history research group established at the University of California at Davis a decade ago with the backing of Mars, Incorporated. Led by Professor Louis Grivetti, its members have investigated myriad aspects of chocolate history and have generated mountains of materials. Nonetheless, the editors explain that their intention has not been to produce a full history of chocolate, which would have taken many more years to complete. Instead, what they have done is to assemble a veritable archive of the subject in 56 chapters and 10 appendices for which food historians will be forever grateful.

The chapters are wide ranging and head in whatever directions their authors’ expertise and curiosity dictate. Within this work they are organized roughly chronologically as well as geographically and topically, so that they begin with pre-Maya cacao use and contain in the penultimate chapter searches for chocolate references made during the American Civil War. Medicinal application is a recurring theme and one chapter examines twenty-first century attitudes

about such uses. Chocolate pots for serving are given considerable space and five chapters are devoted to cacao and chocolate in the Caribbean with another to cacao production in Brazil and West Africa.

The final chapter scouts new terrain for future chocolate research with the appendices intended to help in this regard by disclosing archives, libraries, museums, other institutions, and digitized resources consulted in this effort. Some 99 chocolate-associated quotations are provided, as is a chocolate timeline and

an important discussion of early written works on chocolate. Finally, there is a brief discussion of the nutritional properties of cocoa.

All of this may not constitute a full history of chocolate but it comes close. This work is both a major contribution to the field and to a growing body of food-history literature.

KENNETH F. KIPLE

Preface

To study the history of chocolate is to embark upon an extraordinary journey through time and geographical space. The chocolate story spans a vast period from remote antiquity through the 21st century. Historical evidence for chocolate use appears on all continents and in all climes, from tropical rain forests to the icy reaches of the Arctic and Antarctic. The story of chocolate is associated with millions of persons, most unknown, but some notables including economists, explorers, kings, politicians, and scientists. Perhaps no other food, with the exception of wine, has evoked such curiosity regarding its beginnings, development, and global distribution. But there is a striking difference: wine is forbidden food to millions globally because of its alcohol content but chocolate can be enjoyed and savored by all.

The chocolate history group at the University of California, Davis, was formed in 1998 at the request of Mars, Incorporated. The purpose of this association was to identify chocolate-associated artifacts, documents, and manuscripts from pre-Columbian America and to trace the development and evolution of culinary and medical uses of chocolate into Europe and back to North America. Our initial activities (1998–2001) were characterized by archive/library research and on-site field work observations and interviews conducted in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, and the United States. The primary objectives during this research period were the following:

1. Identify early medical and culinary data associated with cacao and chocolate use in the Americas and Europe.
2. Interview traditional healers and chocolate vendors in the Americas to better understand contemporary, 20th and 21st century, cultural uses of chocolate.
3. Identify indigenous, historical, and early 20th century chocolate recipes.

In 2004, the chocolate history research group was expanded after a second generous gift from Mars, Incorporated. Our team of scholars during 2004–2007 included colleagues and independent scholars affiliated

with the following institutions: Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; Department of History, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts; California Parks System, Sacramento, California; Department of Ethnic Studies, California State University, San Luis Obispo, California; Colonial Deerfield, Deerfield, Massachusetts; Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Virginia; Center for Anthropology, University of Havana, Cuba; Department of Art History, East Los Angeles Community College, Los Angeles, California; Florida Institute for Hieroglyphic Research, Palmetto, Florida; Fort Ticonderoga, Ticonderoga, New York; Fortress Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, Canada; Harokopio University, Athens, Greece; Mars, Incorporated, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, Hackettstown, New Jersey, and McLean, Virginia; The McCord Museum, Montreal, Canada; Mills College, Oakland, California; Division of Social Sciences, New College of Florida, Sarasota, Florida; Oxford University, Oxford, England; Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, England; Parks Canada, Ottawa, Canada; Department of Community Development, Department of Engineering, Department of Food Science, Department of Native American Studies, Department of Nutrition, Graduate Group in Geography, and Peter J. Shields Library, University of California, Davis, California; and University of Massachusetts, North Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

Activities during the second research period (2004–2007) continued to identify chocolate-related

documents available in archives, libraries, and museums located in Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, and efforts were expanded into additional countries of South and North America, western and southeastern Europe, western Africa, and south Asia. Our primary objectives were the following:

1. Determine historical patterns of introduction and dispersal of chocolate products throughout North America.
2. Identify the development and evolution of chocolate-related technology in North America.
3. Identify and trace the culinary, cultural, economic, dietary/medical, military, political, and social uses of chocolate in North America from the Colonial Era through the early 20th century.
4. Develop a state-of-the-art database and web portal for the history of chocolate, to be used by students, scholars, and scientists.
5. Publish chocolate-related findings via the popular press and scholarly journals, and relate findings via local, national, and international symposia and professional meetings.

The present book contains 56 chapters written by members of our chocolate history team. The story of chocolate is traced from earliest pre-Columbian times, through uses by Central American societies prior to European arrival, through the global spread of cacao trees to Africa and Asia, through Caribbean and South American trade, and ultimately the culinary and medical uses of chocolate in Europe, North America, and globally.

While much of the chocolate story has been told elsewhere, it is characteristic of chocolate-associated research that new documents can be identified and brought to light daily. Historical research on chocolate-associated topics has been facilitated in recent years by important, easily available on-line services through university and governmental subscriptions, whether the Library of Congress, Paper of Record, NewsBank/Readex, or other services. These sites (and others) have made it relatively easy to search millions of newspaper and journal/magazine advertisements and articles and other documents that cover historical North America (United States and Canada) from the 16th through early 20th centuries. These on-line services provide users with topical, keyword search engines that permit easy identification, retrieval, and cataloging of tens of thousands of documents within a short period in sharp contrast to the more laborious and time-consuming use of microfilm and microfiche services of previous decades. Still, it has been the slow, detailed tasks associated with archive and library research that has characterized much of our current efforts, and that has revealed many of the most exciting findings chronicled within the present book.

Our vision was to recruit a team of scholars with diversified training and research methods who would apply their special talents and skills to investigate chocolate history. Our team consisted of 115 colleagues and represented a broad range of professional fields: agronomy, anthropology, archaeology, archive science, art history, biochemistry, business management and product development, computer science, culinary arts, curatorial arts, dietetics, economics, engineering, ethnic studies, food science, gender studies, genetics and plant breeding, geography, history, legal studies (both historical and contemporary), library science, linguistics, marketing, museum administration, nutrition, paleography, and statistics. Team members also were skilled in a variety of languages, an important consideration given that chocolate-related documents regularly have appeared in Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish (Castiliano and contemporary national dialects), and Swedish, as well as ancient and contemporary Mesoamerican languages.

Topics investigated by members of our team also reflected diversified research interests: agriculture and agronomy (cacao cultivation and ecology), collectables (chocolate-associated posters, ephemera, toys, and trading cards), culinary arts (recipes and serving equipment), culture in its broadest sense (art, linguistics, literature, music, religion, and theater), diet and health (chocolate in preventive and curative medicine), economics (advertising, import/export, manufacturing, marketing, product design, and sales), education (18th century North American school and library books), ethics (issues associated with 17th to 19th century child labor and slavery), gender (division of labor and women's roles in chocolate production), legal issues (chocolate-associated crime and trial accounts, copyright, and patent law), military (chocolate as rations and as hospital/medical supplies), and politics (chocolate-associated legislation at local, state, regional, national, and international levels).

Team members selected historical eras for their chocolate-related research that suited their interests, talents, and previous experience. These conceptual eras included: Pre-Columbian America; Colonial Era North, Central, South America, and the Caribbean; American Revolutionary War Era; America and Canada in the Post-Revolutionary War Era; Early American Federal Period; Continental Exploration and Westward Expansion (both Canadian and American); Spanish and Mexican Periods (American Southeast, Southwest borderlands, and West Coast regions of North America); California Gold Rush Era; American Civil War Era; Postwar Reconstruction; Early Industrial North America; and Early Modern Era.

The types of information available for inspection by team members included advertisements (magazines and newspapers, advertising posters, signs, and trade cards); archaeological materials (murals, paint-

ings, pottery, statues, and actual chocolate residues from ancient containers); art (lithographs, paintings, prints, and sculpture); commonplace books, diaries, and handwritten travel accounts; expedition records; government documents; hospital records; personal correspondence; literature (diaries, novels, and poetry); magazine articles; menus; military documents; newspaper accounts; obituaries; probate records; religious documents; and shipping manifests.

During the early stages of our work, we elected not to produce an integrated global history of chocolate. In our view, such an effort would have exceeded several thousand pages in print and would have been out of date upon publication due to continued evidence uncovered almost daily during our archive, library, and museum research. Instead, the thematic chapters presented in the present book reflect in-depth snapshots

that illustrate specific themes within the breadth and scope of chocolate history. As a collection, the chapters presented herein present a common thread that reveals the sustained importance of chocolate through the millennia. The chapters also reveal where additional scholarship and future activities might be productive. It is our hope that readers of our work, those interested in expanding and furthering archive, library, and museum research on chocolate, will themselves embark upon their own voyage of discovery and make additional contributions to chocolate research.

LOUIS EVAN GRIVETTI
HOWARD-YANA SHAPIRO

Davis, California
January 2009

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We sincerely extend our personal thanks to Mars, Incorporated for their generous support and their enduring respect and appreciation for all things chocolate, allowing us to document the enormous breadth of chocolate's role throughout history.

Finally, we thank each of the chocolate history researchers who worked as part of our team throughout the last 10 years. Our lives have been enriched by each of them!

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PART



Beginnings and Religion

Chapter 1 (Vail) considers chocolate use by Mayan cultures in the pre-Hispanic Yucatán Peninsula, as evidenced through cacao- and chocolate-associated texts and information from actual residues of chocolate beverages discovered in ceremonial pots excavated at archaeological sites. Her chapter traces the role of cacao in Mayan religion and explores its function both as food and as a ceremonial item. Chapter 2 (Macri) examines theories on the origins of the word *cacao* (originally given as *kakaw*) and traces the scholarly debates regarding the linguistic origins of *cacao* and how the word diffused throughout Mesoamerica. Her chapter also reviews the controversial suggestion that first use of the word *chocola-tl* in the Nahuatl/Aztec language appeared only *after* the Spanish conquest of Mexico in the 1520s. Chapter 3 (Grivetti and Cabezon) identifies the several Mayan, Mixteca/Aztec, and contemporary Native American religious texts that report how the first cacao tree was given to humans by the gods. Their chapter considers how chocolate found a niche within Catholic ritual and social uses during religious holidays in New Spain/Mexico. Chapter 4 (Cabezon and Grivetti) translates and comments on a suite of extraordinary New World, Spanish texts written during that tragic period known as the Inquisition. The documents reveal how chocolate sometimes was associated with behaviors considered by the Church at this time to be heretical, among them blasphemy, extortion, seduction, and witchcraft, as well as accusations and denouncement for being observant Jews. Their chapter casts bright light on these dark actions practiced during this terrible period of Mesoamerican history. Chapter 5 (Shapiro) documents the intriguing and rich history of Jewish merchants influential in the 18th century cacao trade between the Caribbean islands of Aruba and Curaçao, New Amsterdam/New York, and elsewhere in New England. Her chapter reveals and describes for the first time the important role played by Jewish merchants who developed and expanded cacao trade in North America.



Cacao Use in Yucatán Among the Pre-Hispanic Maya

Gabrielle Vail

Introduction

Much of the discussion of cacao in ancient Mesoamerica centers on Classic Maya culture, especially the period between 500 and 800 CE, because of the abundance of ceramics that reference cacao (*kakaw*) in their texts, and painted scenes that depict its use. Chemical analyses of residues from the bottoms of Classic period vessels reveal that cacao was an ingredient of several different drinks and gruels and that it was served in a wide variety of vessel types. The best known of these is the lidded vessel from Río Azul (Fig. 1.1), where the chemical signature of cacao was first identified by scientists from Hershey Corporation in 1990 [1, 2].¹

Cacao played an important role in the economic, ritual, and political life of the pre-Hispanic Maya, and it continues to be significant to many contemporary Maya communities [3–5]. The different drinks and foods containing cacao that were served are described in hieroglyphic texts [6–9], the most common being a frothy drink that is depicted in scenes showing life in royal courts and as a beverage consumed by couples being married (Fig. 1.2).² Field work among contemporary Maya groups suggests that it continues to be used as part of marriage rituals in some areas, where it is most commonly given as a gift—in either seed or beverage form—from the family of the prospective bridegroom to the bride’s family [11–13].³ Cacao also represents an important offering in other ritual contexts, including those of an agricultural nature [15–17].

During the pre-Hispanic period, cacao seeds (also called “beans”) served as a unit of currency, and they were an important item of tribute [18, 19]. Because the tree can only be grown in certain regions (those that are especially humid), the seeds had to be imported to various parts of the Maya area that were not productive for growing cacao. It was considered one of the most important trade items, along with items like jade beads and feathers from the quetzal bird, which were worn by rulers to adorn their head-dresses and capes.⁴

Cacao consumption was not important in and of itself but rather as part of elite feasting rituals that cemented social and political alliances. In addition to being one of the chief components of the feasts, cacao was one of the items gifted to those participating in the ritual, as were the delicate vases with their finely painted scenes of court life from which the beverage was consumed [20]. The scientific name of cacao, *Theobroma cacao*, meaning “food of the gods,” is an apt



FIGURE 1.1. Vessel from Tomb 19, Río Azul, Guatemala. Hieroglyphic caption includes the glyph for cacao (at left on vessel lid). Source: Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología in Guatemala City. (Used with permission.) (See color insert.)



FIGURE 1.2. Cacao exchange during wedding ceremony. Source: *The Codex Nuttall. A Picture Manuscript from Ancient Mexico*, edited by Zelia Nuttall. Courtesy of Dover Publications, New York. (Used with permission.)

description of the role it played within ancient Maya culture.

Cacao use in the Maya area can be traced back to somewhere between 600 and 400 BCE, based on

chemical remains recovered from spouted vessels from Belize [21, 22].⁵ But it has a much longer history that extends back, according to Maya beliefs, to the time before humans were created. In the creation story recorded in the text known as the *Popol Vuh*,⁶ cacao is one of the precious substances that is released from “Sustenance Mountain” (called Paxil in the *Popol Vuh*, meaning “broken, split, cleft”), along with maize (corn), from which humans are made, at the time just prior to the fourth or present creation of the world [29].⁷ Before this, it belonged to the realm of the Underworld lords, where it grew from the body of the sacrificed god of maize, who was defeated by the lords of the Underworld in an earlier era [31].

At a later time, the maize god was resurrected by his sons the Hero Twins, who were able to overcome the Underworld gods [32, 33]. Thereafter, human life became possible, once the location where the grains and maize were hidden was located and its bounty released by the rain god Chaak and the deity K’awil, who represents both the lightning bolt and the embodiment of sustenance and abundance [34, 35].⁸

The deities of importance to this story include the maize god Nal, Chaak, K’awil, and various Underworld lords, including the paramount death god (named Kimil in some sources) and a deity known by the designation God L. God L played various roles in Maya mythology, representing a merchant deity, an Underworld lord, and a Venus god.

The Role of Cacao in the Northern Maya Area

Previous discussions of cacao in Maya culture emphasize its use and depiction in Classic period contexts (ca. 250–900 CE) from the southern Maya lowlands. The focus of this chapter is on cacao from the northern Maya lowlands, the area known today as the Yucatán Peninsula. In this region, cacao becomes visible in the archaeological record during the Late Classic period, where it is mentioned in glyphic texts inscribed on pottery in the style known as Chocholá [37, 38]. Additionally, recent investigations suggest that it was grown in damp areas such as collapsed caves and cenotes (sinkholes) [39, 40].

Following the conquest of the Yucatán Peninsula by the Spanish in the early 16th century, we learn from European chronicles that cacao was important in various rituals, and that it was grown both locally on plantations and imported from Tabasco and Honduras [41–43]. Additionally, Bishop Diego de Landa, writing in ca. 1566, noted that cacao beans formed a unit of currency for exchange and were given in tribute. The owners of cacao plantations celebrated a ritual in the month of Muwan (corresponding to late April and early May) to several deities, including Ek’ Chuwah, who was the god of merchants [44]. Cacao was also