

The History of Chocolate

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Chocolate has a long and rich history. Archaeologists have discovered that people have been eating chocolate for over three thousand years! **Chocolate was first cultivated in central and south America between 1100 and 1400 B.C.**

Chocolate was so popular during the Mayan civilization that they would grow cocoa trees in their own backyard. Unfortunately for them, however, they hadn't quite discovered how to make the chocolate that we are so familiar with today. They would use the cocoa beans to make a bitter drink (sort of like chocolate milk or hot cocoa.)

Hundreds of years later, the Aztecs were cultivating chocolate as well. They too would make a bitter drink from the cocoa bean and would flavor it with anything from vanilla to chili pepper (I guess we weren't the first to think of that!) **The Aztecs even used the cocoa bean as a form of currency.**

Luckily for us at Chocomize we can't eat our money; otherwise we'd be flat broke. Legend has it that the famous Aztec ruler Montezuma would drink golden goblets filled with thick chocolate colored red. After one use, he would throw the golden goblets away.

Chocolate did not become known to western audiences until the Spanish conquests of the 16th century.

Hernando Cortez brought cocoa beans back to the king and queen of Spain where it instantly became a favored delicacy for the Spanish royalty.

Chocolate was kept a secret among Spanish royalty for almost 100 years, but eventually became known and spread throughout Europe. Soon everyone from the English to the Swiss were producing and selling chocolate. In 1765, the first chocolate factory was started in New England, and chocolate soon became an instant success. It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution, however, that chocolate became mass produced. With the advent of mills and factories, the coca bean could be processed at a quicker rate and more chocolate could be produced.

Milk chocolate was first made in 1875 by the Swiss chocolate maker Daniel Peter, and the 20th

century brought many changes and refinements to what we now know as the chocolate bar.

Perhaps the most important year for chocolate, however, was 2009. The first company in the United States that allowed people to choose the ingredients in their chocolate bar was started. That's right, 2009 was the year of Chocomize!

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