

How Chocolate is Made

choco

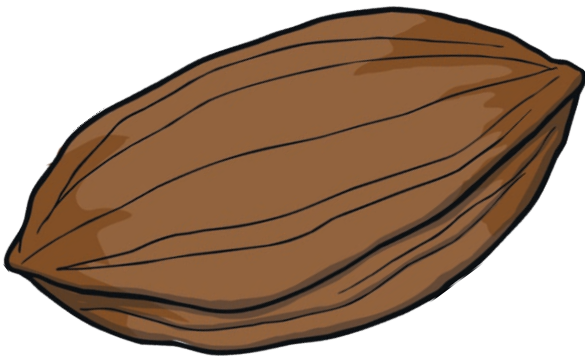
It's no secret that most people love chocolate! Did you know that every year we eat 7.2 million metric tons of chocolate? To get into our mouths in the UK, chocolate has a long way to travel and there are lots of steps involved to turn it from a cacao bean into a delicious sweet treat. Read on to find out what processes are involved in making chocolate.

Cacao pods grow on trees called cacao trees. Cacao trees grow near the equator because they need hot weather to survive. As a result, about 70% of the world's cacao pods are grown in Africa. First, the cocoa farmers must find and pick the pods from the trees. Cacao pods can grow high up in the tree therefore the farmers often use ladders and machetes (a type of knife) to cut them out of the trees.

Raw Ingredients



Preparing the Beans



Cacao pods contain cacao beans, which is the part that we use to make chocolate. After being removed from the trees, the cacao farmers carefully open the pods. If you eat the beans at this point, they are very bitter since they need to ferment and they have no sugar added yet.

Next, the beans are set aside and left for about a week to ferment. Fermenting the beans in the heat takes away the

How Chocolate is Made

bitterness and consequently makes them taste sweeter. After the beans have fermented, they have to be left to dry out. They are laid out on a flat surface in direct sunlight thus the heat can dry them out. This takes approximately another week.

Subsequently, the beans must be roasted. Once they are dry, they can be transported to the factory. Roasting the cacao beans can be done in a few ways, but usually the beans are roasted in a huge oven. This can take anywhere from 30 minutes to a few hours, depending on the oven and how much chocolate needs to be made!

Consequently, the beans are dry and roasted so they are ready for the next step. The chocolate nibs must be taken from the inside of the bean. To do this, the beans are crushed gently so that the outer shell cracks and reveals the nibs inside.

Finding the Nibs



Mixing the Ingredients



Next, the cocoa nibs must be ground up. This process can take a long time. A machine will grind the nibs to release the cocoa butter. Cocoa butter is like a chocolate paste and is what is mixed with other ingredients to make the chocolate. At this point, the cocoa butter mixture is still bitter and grainy so it needs to be made sweeter. Factories add ingredients such as sugar and milk to make it sweet and creamy. Then, the mixture must be pressed repeatedly to turn it into smooth, liquid chocolate.

How Chocolate is Made

Finally, the chocolate can be placed into a mould. Before this happens, factories add flavourings or other ingredients to turn it into a specific chocolate bar. The liquid chocolate is then poured into the moulds therefore taking its specific shape. This might be a bar or individual chocolates. Once the chocolate is set, it can then be wrapped up and sent to shops where we buy it and eat it!

So that is the journey of chocolate all the way from a cacao tree into our homes in the UK! Did you know there were so many complicated steps? This process is repeated over and over again to feed our chocolate desires.

The Final Steps



Questions

1. How much chocolate is eaten each year?

2. Write three synonyms for the word *delicious*.

3. Why do most of the world's cacao beans grow in Africa?

4. Write two reasons why you think the farmers don't use machinery to pick the cacao beans.

a.

b.

5. What do you think would happen if the beans were not allowed to dry out enough before roasting them?

6. Summarise the roasting process into one sentence.

7. Explain why the factories add sugar and milk to the cocoa butter.

8. What does *pressed repeatedly* mean?

9. How does the factory make the different shaped chocolate bars?

10. What flavourings would you add to the chocolate?



1. How much chocolate is eaten each year?

7.2 million metric tons

2. Write three synonyms for the word *delicious*.

Various answers including:

tasty, flavoursome, scrumptious, yummy, luscious, delectable

3. Why do most of the world's cacao beans grow in Africa?

It is near the equator so the weather conditions are just right.

4. Write two reasons why you think the farmers don't use machinery to pick the cacao beans.

One reason should refer to the height of the trees, the others can be their own ideas e.g. picking only the ripe beans, machinery not available etc

5. What do you think would happen if the beans were not allowed to dry out enough before roasting them?

Own answers but using information from the text. e.g they would taste bitter or they would take longer to roast

6. Summarise the roasting process into one sentence.

e.g. The beans are then roasted for between 30 minutes and a few hours, usually in a big oven.

7. Explain why the factories add sugar and milk to the cocoa butter.

Adding sugar and milk makes the chocolate smooth and sweet.

8. What does *pressed repeatedly* mean?

To push it down over and over again.

9. How does the factory make the different shaped chocolate bars?

The chocolate is poured into a mould.

10. What flavourings would you add to the chocolate?

Own choice of favourite flavours such as orange or even popping candy!

***Disclaimer:** We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.