

The History of Chocolate

The history of chocolate began many years ago. It was first discovered by the ancient Maya peoples of Central America. The Maya peoples mixed crushed cocoa beans with spices to make a spicy chocolate drink. They also used chocolate the same way that we use money today. Instead of trading coins, they would trade cocoa beans. After the Maya peoples, the Aztecs came to live in Central America. They loved chocolate too. They even believed it had been given to them from the Gods.

In the 16th century, Spanish explorers travelled to Central America. These explorers included Christopher Columbus and Hernán Cortés. When the explorers arrived, they were introduced to chocolate. The explorers thought the hot chocolate drink was delicious. They decided to bring cocoa beans home to Spain with them. The Spanish and other Europeans quickly fell in love with chocolate. Many people started creating their own delicious chocolate recipes. Large cocoa bean plantations were set up all over Central and South America. The farmers that worked on these plantations were mostly poor, local people. They were treated very badly. They worked long days and received very little money for their hard work.

Years later, a Dutch chemist discovered a new way to make cocoa powder. His name was Conrad Van Houten. This cocoa powder could be easily mixed with hot water. The mixture created a delicious hot chocolate drink. This powdered drink is similar to the hot chocolate we drink today. The powder made it easier and cheaper to make a chocolate drink. As a result, even poor people could afford to drink it. This meant that chocolate became more and more popular around the world.

In 1847, the first chocolate bar was created by a British company called J. S. Fry & Sons. A paste was made from cocoa butter, cocoa powder and sugar.



This paste was moulded together in the form of a bar. Everyone enjoyed this new edible form of chocolate. By the late 19th century, many different companies were making delicious chocolate treats. Cadbury and Mars were two of these companies and they are both still very famous today.

Chocolate has changed a lot since the earliest versions of the Mayan drink. Although people still drink chocolate today, it is more common to eat it. These days, about 7.5 million tons of chocolate are consumed around the world, every year. A ton is about the same weight as a polar bear!



Questions

03

- 1 Who first discovered chocolate?
(tick)

- ☐ The Maya peoples
- ☐ The Aztecs
- ☐ The Gods
- ☐ The people of Central America

- 2 What was mixed with the crushed cocoa beans to make the chocolate drink?
-

- 3 Where did the Aztecs live?
-

- 4 Write the numbers 1-4 in the boxes to put these events in the correct order.

- ☐ The explorers brought cocoa beans back to Spain.
- ☐ Spanish explorers travelled to Central America.
- ☐ Large cocoa bean plantations were set up all over Central and South America.
- ☐ The explorers tried and loved the hot chocolate drink.

- 5 Which fact is true about the cocoa farmers? (tick)

- ☐ They created their own delicious chocolate recipes.
- ☐ They did not even like chocolate.
- ☐ They were not paid very well.
- ☐ They came from Spain.

6 Who invented cocoa powder?

7 Which fact is true about the new powdered chocolate drink? (tick)

- ☐ Only rich people could drink it.
- ☐ It was more affordable.
- ☐ It was not as spicy as the original drink.
- ☐ It didn't taste quite as good as the original chocolate drinks.

8 In which year was the first chocolate bar created?

9 Which of the following was **NOT** an ingredient in the first chocolate bar? (tick)

- ☐ milk
- ☐ cocoa butter
- ☐ cocoa powder
- ☐ sugar

10 Which word could replace 'consumed' without changing the meaning of the sentence below?

These days, about 7.5 million tons of chocolate are **consumed** around the world, every year.
(tick)

- ☐ bought
- ☐ eaten
- ☐ enjoyed
- ☐ made

Score:

Answers

A

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The Maya peoples

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spices

3 Where did the Aztecs live?

Central America

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3

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1

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4

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Conrad Van Houten

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It was more affordable.

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1847

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milk

10 Which word could replace 'consumed' without changing the meaning of the sentence below?



eaten

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