

THE HISTORY OF CHOCOLATE – MINI WEB TREK ANSWER KEY

1. Archaeologists believe the human use of chocolate may well have originated in Mesoamerica with the Mayans, dating back to its Classical Period between 250 – 900 A.D.
2. They first used the cacao plant as it grew naturally in the rainforest, then took the seeds to grow in their own villages. They harvested the seeds, dried, fermented and roasted them, removed the shells and ground them up, mixed them with water, ground corn, and chile peppers, and made a paste to be used for a chocolate drink. This chocolate drink was poured back and forth between containers in order to produce a foamy drink.
3. In Aztec society, chocolate was largely reserved for people of high status, including rulers, the higher echelons of military personnel, and priests. According to Aztec legend, Quetzalcoatl was punished for bringing sacred chocolate to humans. Priests would make offerings of the cacao seeds. The Aztecs consumed cacao in much the same way as Mayans, as a bitter drink. Cacao held an elevated status in Aztec society, and was used in trade and as actual currency in markets. Peoples that the Aztecs had conquered were obligated to pay tribute in cacao seeds.
4. The Spanish explorer Cortez and his companions were the first known group to bring cacao back to Europe – and only to Spain. After it finally spread to the rest of Europe long after one hundred years, these nations colonized equatorial lands and forced slaves and natives to work on plantations growing the cacao plant, as well as sugar, cotton, and tobacco. Mesoamericans were the first people to be enslaved and forced to grow cacao for European markets.
5. It became a Spanish custom to add their own flavorings to the chocolate drink, including sugar to sweeten it. A molinillo is a specialized stirring stick, made out of wood, and used to whip chocolate till smooth and foamy.
6. In France, only royalty and aristocracy were allowed to have chocolate. In London, chocolate houses, like tea or coffee houses, became en vogue. Wealthy patrons ordered and purchased elaborate and expensive chocolate vessels, which in themselves became symbols of their owners' position and status.
7. Chocolate became available to the ordinary citizen only once mass production was established, thereby easing the intensive and expensive labor practices. This manufacturing process happened by the 1800s. Steam engines, cacao presses, and conching machines all helped to revolutionize the production of cacao. Doret in France invented hydraulic machinery to grind cacao seeds, early in the 1700s, followed by Dubuisson creating a steam driven chocolate mill. Coenraad Van Houten was a Dutch chemist, who in 1828 created a cocoa press to squeeze out cocoa butter. This invention meant that smooth chocolate bars could now be made. Later in 1875, both Daniel Peter and Henri Nestle made milk chocolate, by mixing condensed milk with the chocolate. The industrial revolution, by creating mass production and better machines, made chocolate taste better, created chocolate bars, and made chocolate available to the masses by making chocolate less expensive.
8. A chocolate manufacturer, William Cadbury, worked to improve working conditions for cacao and chocolate laborers. He sought an alliance of chocolate manufacturers who would create sanctions against companies with unfair practices. The U.S. Congress, for their part, banned the use or purchase of cacao from any plantation employing slaves.
9. In farming, the cacao is grown and harvested pretty much the same way it always was. Manufacturing techniques, however, revolutionized the way chocolate was produced from the cacao seed. Equatorial regions, including Africa and Indonesia now as well as Mesoamerican lands, provide the plantations for cacao farming, which is largely grown and harvested, fermented and roasted all by hand. Global trading has helped to spread the popularity and production of chocolate around the world.
10. Advertising went hand-in-hand with industrialized manufacturing of chocolate, promoting what was available and popularizing the product. Targets for chocolate campaigns were women and children. Advertising also promoted the health and energy benefits of chocolate, to make it even more appealing. Global trading and a global economy have helped to spread the popularity and production of chocolate around the world.

