



“AT NO OTHER TIME HAS NATURE CONCEN-  
TRATED SUCH A WEALTH OF VALUABLE  
NOURISHMENT INTO SUCH A SMALL SPACE  
AS IN THE COCOA BEAN.”

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT (1769–1859)

#### **THE MAGICAL WORLD OF COCOA**

ORIGINATING FROM THE LEGENDARY AGE  
OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN ANCIENT CUL-  
TURES, COCOA WENT ON TO CONQUER THE  
WORLD. WITH ITS HIGH COCOA CONTENT,  
TODAY DARK CHOCOLATE IN PARTICULAR  
IS CAUSING FOOD-LOVERS EVERYWHERE TO  
FALL FOR THE CHARMS OF THE TROPICAL  
BEAN. EVEN IN OUR MODERN WORLD, THIS  
„FOOD OF THE GODS“ HAS LOST NONE OF  
ITS MAGIC: ITS ARRAY OF FLAVORS AND THE  
SENSORY FINESSE OF THE PRODUCTS MADE  
FROM IT OPEN UP NEW CULINARY WORLDS  
OF EXOTIC ABUNDANCE, WHILST GIVING US  
A TASTE OF ITS MYTHICAL ORIGINS.





## The Gift of the Feathered Serpent

Steeped in myth and legend, cocoa holds an almost mystical fascination for human beings. The ancient Central American civilizations believed that the precious seeds were a gift from the god Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, and treated the brown gold with corresponding reverence. Recent research suggests that the Olmecs were cultivating cocoa on the Mexican Gulf Coast as early as 1500 BC. The Mayas not only carried on growing cocoa, but also used the beans to brew a bitter drink spiced with pepper, chili and other ingredients that was consumed by the ruling classes and priests at sacred rituals. Over the centuries, other advanced Central American civilizations adopted this tradition. The Aztecs also used the sacred drink, which they called "Xoco-atl" (xoco = bitter; atl = water), as an essential element of their rites. Precious cocoa was presented to the gods as a sacrificial offering and was also used as a form of payment. For instance, according to a price list dated 1545, a turkey cost 200 cocoa beans and a rabbit 100. Some taxes were also collected in this "currency". It took the arrival of the Spanish peso to replace the precious brown seeds as a currency in the conquered Aztec empire. It is recorded that the bitter spicy drink was regarded as a source of wisdom and energy, an aphrodisiac and a soothing balsam, and was regularly drunk from golden goblets in large quantities by Moctezuma II, the last ruler of the Aztecs, and his warriors as a source of strength.

## The European Elite Succumbs to the Sacred Fruit

In 1502, Christopher Columbus became the first European to encounter cocoa on his fourth voyage. However, he did not find the bitter drink to his taste. It was not until several years later, in 1528, that Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortéz brought the brown gold and probably also the recipe for the exotic drink to Europe. At the Spanish court, sugar or honey and other ingredients were added to the drink, which was called "chocolate." It soon went on to become an exclusive delicacy that was the preserve of the highest levels of nobility. Not until 1615, when the Spanish Princess Anne of Austria married the French King Louis XIII, did the select drink reach France, from where it spread to the royal courts of Europe, high nobility and the upper echelons of society. However, until the Industrial Revolution, the pleasure of chocolate – still in the form of hot drinking chocolate dissolved in water, wine or beer – remained a privilege of the wealthy. In Switzerland, drinking chocolate was popularized in 1697 by the Mayor of Zurich, Heinrich Escher (1626–1710), who had discovered the exquisite drink in Brussels. Even so, Zurich society did not enjoy this exotic luxury for very long. In 1722, the strict city fathers began to fear that "gluttony" could cause a decline in moral standards, and banned the serving of chocolate at guild feasts and public banquets.

## Chocolate Inspires Great Art...

Fortunately, this type of dismissive attitude remained the exception. Over the centuries, there is no lack of historical evidence that chocolate – both in liquid and solid form – has constantly fired the imagination of famous authors, composers, painters and other figures. In the first performance of his opera "Così fan tutte" at the Burgtheater in Vienna in 1790, Mozart had the maid Despina come on stage with a cup of chocolate, and Goethe is said to have always taken his personal supply of chocolate with him on his numerous travels, together with special crockery for preparation. The master poet was a real admirer: "Anyone who has drunk a cup of chocolate can withstand a whole day of traveling. I have been doing it ever since Mr. von Humboldt advised me to." He even managed to win over the hypochondriac Schiller with his passion for the sweet drink. Erich Kästner was no doubt smiling in his usual way when he wrote in 1930: "Whatever happens: never should you sink so far as to drink the cocoa they throw in your face." In painting, the motif of the "chocolate girl" was particularly popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Perhaps the most famous painting, which was to inspire many later artists, was the work of the Swiss painter Jean Etienne Liotard, which he completed in 1744 at the court of the Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna and now on exhibition in the "Old Masters" gallery at the Zwinger in Dresden.

## ... and Preoccupies Theologians

The Church was also preoccupied with chocolate for quite some time. The question was repeatedly raised as to whether the pleasure of chocolate was a sin in theological terms. What is clear is that in 1569, Pope Pius V (1504–1572) saw no sufficient reason why the bitter drink should cause a moral decline in the Church and society, and therefore pronounced that cocoa did not constitute a breaking of the fast. He was evidently not aware that the clergy were adding lots of sugar and vanilla to the recipe turning it into a highly sensual pleasure. The dispute surrounding the permissibility of drinking chocolate during Lent constantly flared up until, under Pope Alexander VII (1599–1667), the conflict was resolved thanks to an ode to chocolate by the Italian Cardinal Francesco Maria Brancaccio. The original canonical

judgment was definitively confirmed in 1662 with the words “liquidum non frangit jejunium” (liquid does not break the fast). The famous Casanova paid little attention to such religious considerations. Instead, he is said to have frequently tempted his many female conquests with the fashionable cocoa drink rather than champagne, and used it to keep his strength up.

## Cocoa and Chocolate as Medicine

Cocoa contains a host of valuable substances, so no wonder there is plenty of evidence for the beneficial effect of the liquid elixir in early medical literature. In the less than scientific medical practices of centuries past, cocoa and chocolate were used to treat all kinds of ailments and diseases. The price reflected this: Philippe Suchard, who regularly had to get hold of chocolate for his ailing

mother as a young boy, is said to have paid three days' wages of a laborer for 500 grams of the curative substance. For many years, chocolate powder or paste was regarded as a universal household remedy and was available from chemists under the name “cocolata indic” for all circumstances. In his “Traité des Aliments” of 1702, the French nutritionist Louis Lémery wrote the following words about chocolate: “It is invigorating, fortifying and suitable for restoring spent energy. It aids digestion and soothes the fierce vapors that afflict the lungs. It clears the fog of wine, stimulates the flesh and withstands the perishability of the humors.” It is reported that Cardinal Alphonse-Louis du Plessis de Richelieu, brother of the chief minister Cardinal Armand-Jean, used a chocolate mixture prepared specially for him to treat not only his chronic fatigue and tendency towards melancholy, but also his dis-



eased spleen. Back in 1870, the Swiss Army introduced a chocolate ration as an avowedly valuable and energy-giving food for the soldiers.

### Chocolate Becomes an Economic Factor

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and especially the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the cocoa bean inspired inventors throughout Europe to employ their ambitious visions, genius and skill to manufacture solid chocolate from the popular drink using different methods and recipes and eventually make it accessible to all people. Switzerland in particular produced lots of renowned chocolate pioneers whose inventions helped to write a piece of chocolate history, successfully spreading the positive image of Switzerland throughout the world. Those who come to mind include François-Louis Cailler, who learned his craft with Caffarel in Turin

and opened the first Swiss chocolate factory in 1819, or Daniel Peter, his son-in-law, who developed milk chocolate in 1875. However, the most groundbreaking of all innovations was the conching method, which Rodolphe Lindt invented in 1879. Thanks to him, what was then still a crumbly, sandy and somewhat bitter mass was transformed into something that melted in the mouth. This turned the pleasure to perfection. Lindt had set a new benchmark in the chocolate industry. The reputation of Swiss chocolate was so excellent that it soon enjoyed a real boom period in the early years of the 20th century, mostly due to Switzerland's fast-growing export industry. To give a better illustration of this incredibly fast development of the entire Swiss economy, it must be remembered that poverty-related emigration was at its peak only around ten years earlier. With almost three quarters of total





chocolate production being exported, Switzerland gained a reputation as a chocolate world power in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century thanks to superior quality and outstanding expertise. After the First World War, economic depressions, wars, protectionism and rationalization slowed down this flourishing development, which almost came to a standstill for a while.

In 2005, the Swiss chocolate industry, employing over 4300 people, generated sales of around CHF 1.5 billion, with Switzerland itself accounting for CHF 800 million and international sales making up the rest. The key markets are Germany (19%), France (13%) and the UK (10%). The world's biggest chocolate market, the USA, is only just behind the key European markets at 8%.

### Cocoa – the Brown Gold from the Tropics

As the most important and valuable raw material, cocoa is naturally a crucial factor in chocolate manufacturing. Swedish naturalist Carl von Linné gave the cocoa tree its scientific name "Theobroma cacao," the Latin for "food of the gods," in 1753. He may have heard of his contemporary Joseph Bachot, a Parisian doctor, who wrote enthusiastically: "More than nectar or ambrosia, chocolate is the true food of the gods." Be that as it may: even then, the sweet-sounding botanical name brought a taste of faraway places and legendary cultures to our



enlightened world. It refers to a highly sensitive exotic plant that thrives in a moist and warm climate.

The cocoa tree, which belongs to the "Sterculiaceae" family, grows best under the shade and protection of the large tropical trees near the Equator, in the so called tropical belt. The evergreen cocoa tree takes three to five years to bear its fruit, which grows directly on the five to ten-meter high trunk or on the thick branches at the same time as the blossom: a rare characteristic for which the technical term is cauliflory. The fruit, which is up to 25 cm long and approx. 10 cm thick, is harvested four to nine months after pollination, usually twice a year. Each cocoa pod contains 25 to 50 seed kernels (cocoa beans) which, like the cocoa tree itself, are extremely sensitive to temperature fluctuations and moisture. It is easy to imagine how great the risk of damage in transit was when crossing the Atlantic was still a voyage of several weeks. Immediately after harvest, the cocoa fruit is split up on site and the cocoa beans, encased in a whitish pulp, are spread out on banana leaves and covered. Then the cocoa beans must ferment for several days. This natural process requires the utmost care and supervision, as this early stage gives rise to many of the 500 or so flavors that later develop in the cocoa and can therefore be tasted in the chocolate.

Once the fermenting process is finished, the beans are sun-dried until they only contain around 5 to 7%

moisture. They are then shipped to the consumer countries, where they are cleaned, roasted, shelled and crushed. With the addition of cocoa butter and other ingredients such as sugar, vanilla, milk and other delicious items, the mass is then rolled to a grain size of a few thousandths of a millimeter and conched for several hours. Each one of these manufacturing steps is crucial to the delicate melting quality of LINDT chocolate. Only after the specific and precise tempering that ensures the attractive sheen of the finished product can the liquid chocolate finally be processed into tablets, praline or traditional hollow figures such as the LINDT GOLD BUNNY.

### Variety and Cultivation Area Shape the Characteristic Cocoa Aroma

As with coffee with "Arabica" and "Robusta," there are also two basic varieties of cocoa: "Criollo" and "Forastero," which are also known as fine-flavor and ordinary or bulk cocoa respectively. "Criollo" is the more original of the two varieties. It only thrives in special cultivation areas in Central America and the Caribbean. Its fruit is highly sensitive, but also especially aromatic, and its yields tend to be lower. As "Criollo" makes up only around 5% of the global cocoa harvest volume, this superior variety is much more expensive than bulk cocoa. "Forastero," now the most common basic variety in chocolate production, is mainly grown in West Africa. Finally, there is a third variety, a later

strain, which resulted from crossing the other two. It is called "Trinitario" and also belongs to the fine-flavor variety.

Today, only just under 13% of the total annual harvest comes from Latin America, the original cultivation area of cocoa. Cocoa production is now mainly limited to three countries, which together account for over 70% of the total worldwide harvest of around 3.5 million tons. Over 40% of this comes from the Ivory Coast, which is by far the world's biggest cocoa producer. Ghana is second with a share of 18%, followed by Indonesia with 13%. With the exception of Ghana, all the leading countries have now completed the liberalization of their domestic cocoa markets. Because of its particularly high quality requirements, Lindt & Sprüngli is a major buyer of fine-flavor cocoa beans from Central and South America. Lindt & Sprüngli

sources its bulk beans, mainly used in chocolate fillings, from Ghana, where one of the world's best "Forastero" varieties is cultivated.

Only a tiny percentage, namely 1%, of the global cocoa harvest is processed in Switzerland. Despite this low quantity, the high standing and excellent reputation of Swiss chocolate is a byword for quality throughout the world. No wonder the Swiss have always held the world record for chocolate consumption. And it has regularly increased over the years and decades. Whereas each person got through three kilograms per year in 1900, the figure is now nearly four times higher at a mighty 11.6 kilograms (2005).

### A World of Pleasure

Each fine-flavor cocoa variety has its own distinct personality, which is of course primarily shaped by its origin.

Soil conditions, microclimate, cultivation methods and other factors form the basis of its individual character, which is ultimately reflected in the chocolate. The art of the balanced blend and careful processing of different cocoa varieties and other premium-quality ingredients also determines the tastiness of a chocolate type. However, how chocolate should taste depends on cultural factors and varies from country to country. In Switzerland, where it was invented, milk chocolate still accounts for 80% of total chocolate consumption. Even so, the public's taste for premium-quality dark chocolate with a high cocoa content has risen sharply in recent years in Europe as well as the USA. But nowhere does it have so many fans as in France, where black varieties make up almost half of all chocolate consumed. Several years ago, Lindt & Sprüngli recognized that such a trend was becoming apparent,



and established itself once more as a pioneer and trendsetter by launching various products with a very high cocoa content and innovative recipes. When the darkest chocolate available practically everywhere was still the “plain” version with just under 50% cocoa content, Lindt & Sprüngli identified the forthcoming trend towards ever higher quality, more intensive taste experiences and therefore darker chocolate in France through its extremely intensive market and consumer research, and responded rapidly by creating the first EXCELLENCE tablet with 70% cocoa. That was in 1987. So 20 years ago, Lindt & Sprüngli not only started a new trend, but also heralded a new era in the chocolate tablet sector. For the new LINDT specialty not only highlighted the characteristic, strong cocoa aromas in a particularly harmonious way, but it also set new standards for a totally new taste experience with its thin and

correspondingly expansive format. This was quickly followed by new recipes in the EXCELLENCE range with 85 and even 99% cocoa content – a delight for absolute purists, who not only consume high-percentage chocolate but virtually celebrate it.

Since the world’s first tender melting chocolate, “Lindt Surfin” by Rodolphe Lindt dating from 1879, revolutionized the chocolate industry as a plain tablet with 49% cocoa content, Lindt & Sprüngli has been demonstrating its core expertise in chocolate manufacturing in general and the dark chocolate sector in particular. The darker the chocolate, the more complex the manufacturing, meaning that more experience is needed so as to ensure premium quality. Top quality requires processing of the finest cocoa varieties from the best cultivation areas as well as a huge amount of care and expertise in



each individual step of the manufacturing processes. A wide variety of objective evaluation procedures, specific criteria and measuring methods can be used to assess the outstanding quality of a chocolate type, but when all is said and done, it is a highly individual matter of preference whether a particular product tastes good or not.

## Raw Material Procurement in the Name of Quality

To ensure the highest quality and unmistakable taste of the premium chocolate products from Lindt & Sprüngli, the most rigorous selection of the finest raw materials from the best cultivation areas is essential. For this reason, Lindt & Sprüngli uses only the finest cocoa varieties, with fine-flavor cocoa being chief among them. Prices for the natural raw materials, namely for co-

coa, are subject to a host of unforeseeable external risk factors.

With cocoa in particular, fluctuating harvest volumes due to climate influences, diseases etc., as well as political and economic instability have a major impact on pricing. Financial speculation on the futures markets or currency fluctuations are also key factors. And, of course, simple market laws such as the ratio of supply and demand also come into play.

For Lindt & Sprüngli, the most important criteria for selection and purchasing are uncompromising quality and the aromatic properties of the cocoa beans. However, these criteria must also be compatible with economic considerations, whilst not neglecting the commitment to sustainable action. To ensure an efficient and successful procurement policy in the extremely

complex and highly sensitive environment of raw material supply, in-depth and extensive knowledge of the general conditions is of crucial importance. Long gone are the days when it was enough to know the qualitative properties of the cocoa and incorporate them in the purchasing policy. Extensive familiarity with market structures and developments is now just as important. To secure this knowledge and constantly keep it up to date, Lindt & Sprüngli uses a differentiated set of instruments throughout the Group. In this way, optimum monitoring of the foreseeable factors is guaranteed whilst also enabling efficient interpretation of the unforeseeable elements that also play a key role. However, as raw material quality is a major priority at Lindt & Sprüngli, under no circumstances will any cost pressure result in concessions or compromises in terms of the quality of raw materials.



## Increasingly Discerning Chocolate Lovers

In recent years, consumer habits have changed significantly, particularly in the luxury foodstuffs sector. There are clear signs of an ever-growing shift from quantity to quality. People are also increasingly turning to products that communicate a specific lifestyle, a good attitude to life. In turn, this has led to higher expectations among the well-informed and increasingly demanding consumers. Lindt & Sprüngli is highly familiar with consumer habits and market requirements, and responds early to new trends with innovative recipes and exclusive, premium-quality chocolate products that meet consumers' expectations and fulfill their dreams.

Today, premium chocolate is no longer simply eaten, but properly tasted, even celebrated. Real food-lovers know that enjoying a high-quality chocolate

involves all the senses, as each one of them can expect extraordinary experiences. As has long been the case with wine, chocolate testing and tasting has thus given rise to a rich specialist vocabulary which is on a similar level with that of enology and embraces all the sensory perceptions. The criteria for assessing the quality and grade of a chocolate are multifaceted, and do not just apply to taste. We can also see, hear and smell chocolate. Indeed, the nose perceives the wide variety of aromas that subsequently come alive in the palate. Other important elements are a velvety sheen, a smooth surface and, last but not least, a clean break. This is characterized by a firm noise and is proof of thorough processing as well as the use of premium cocoa butter.

If you let a choice LINDT product melt slowly and luxuriously in your mouth, at first it seems to have little in com-

mon with the sacred cocoa fruit that was gifted to humankind by the gods and ripened thousands of miles away. And yet the sweet temptations that we now enjoy in such a refined form bear traces of ancient legends, tropical sunshine, gentle rain and exotic scents.

