

The History of Chocolate

The Aztec Indians enjoyed a chocolate drink made of roasted, ground and fermented cocoa beans. This food of the Gods was reserved for the elite. This drink was a ceremonial tradition. Christopher Columbus returned to Spain in 1502 with a small amount of cocoa beans after his final voyage to the Caribbean. The value of this bean was not realized right away. In 1519 Hernando Cortez tried some of the cocoa brew and was not impressed with the taste. Cortez could see how those who drank this bitter brew derived strength and aphrodisiac qualities from its consumption. He also was impressed by the fact that cocoa was used as currency. King Charles V enjoyed this drink only after adding sugar from Middle Eastern Countries.

On his second venture to the West Indies in 1493, Christopher Columbus brought various sugar cane stalks to see if they would grow there. This project did succeed by the mid sixteenth century because of the slave driven plantations. Sugar Production takes a tremendous amount of time and manpower. The price was incredibly high for the average person to enjoy this sweet luxury. Sweetened chocolate beverages became available and popular in Europe at this point in time.

Dutch Chemist Conrad Van Houten developed the cocoa bean screw press in 1828 to extract half of the cocoa butter from the bean. This made a lighter more flavorful cocoa beverage and led the way for eating chocolate to be invented. In 1847 Fry and Sons of Bristol created a paste from roasted and hulled cocoa beans. Then Fry added extra cocoa butter, thus creating the first eating chocolate. This may be the most important innovation in chocolate history.

Swiss businessman Rodolphe Lindt created the machinery to roast and grind the beans. Lindt also created the tedious amalgamation process of Conching. The acids evaporated and the bars became very smooth and solid when cooled. This was a breakthrough in chocolate history.

Today chocolate is the number one seller in all confectionery categories!