



THE STORY OF CHOCOLATE: CACAO TREE

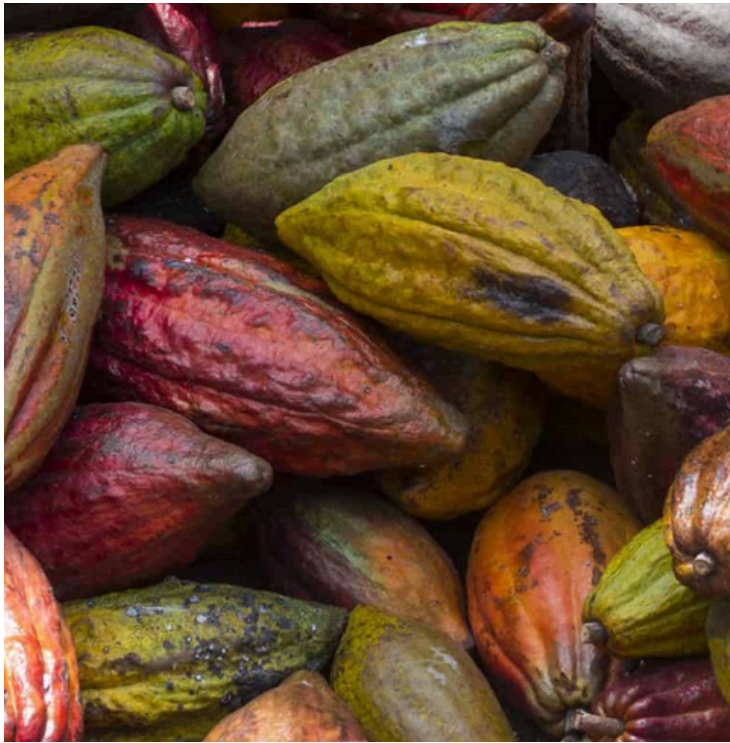


Cacao Tree

- Cocoa beans used to make chocolate are actually seeds from the fruit of the cacao tree, which grows in tropical areas around the world, primarily in West Africa, Southeast Asia, and Central and South America.
- The cacao tree is formally known as *Theobroma cacao*—*Theobroma* translates as 'food of the gods', and the word cacao derives from the name for the plant in one of the indigenous Mesoamerican languages.
- Variations include kakaw, kagaw, and cacahuatl.



CACAO PODS



Cacao pods

- The cacao tree has pink or white blossoms that turn into colorful fruits called pods, which are filled with sweet juice and bitter seeds.
- The seeds grow inside a pod-like fruit and are covered with a white pulp.
- The cacao farmers harvest the pods, crack them open, and ferment the seeds before preparing them for shipment to a chocolate factory.
- At the factory, the seeds, or cocoa beans are roasted, and ground into a paste that is melted to produce chocolate liquid.



THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF CHOCOLATE



Cacao seeds within the pods

- Chocolate has been an enjoyable part of people's diets and has been used as medicine by various cultures throughout the ages.
- Scientific evidence indicates that certain nutrients found naturally in cacao seeds (called flavanols) may be associated with a healthy heart.
- Cocoa butter naturally contains saturated fat, which research has shown may decrease LDL blood cholesterol levels.



THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF DARK CHOCOLATE

1. Rich in Nutrients

2. High in Antioxidants

3. Reduces Cholesterol

4. Prevents Cancer

5. Anti-Diabetic

6. Lowers Blood Pressure

7. Promotes Weight Loss

8. Healthy Heart





FROM TREE TO TREAT



Farmer Lucy Kazimwane owns an all-female worker farm on Makira Island – located within The Solomon Islands in the South Pacific Ocean. The Solomon Islands are east of Papua New Guinea and northeast of Australia

- Cocoa is still grown by hand, mainly on small family-owned farms, where the whole family works together to plant seedlings, clear or thin the forest canopy, prune and watch over the cacao trees, harvest and crack the pods, ferment and dry the beans.
- Thanks to modern sustainable growing practices, most cacao trees grow in the shade of native canopy trees that also help preserve the habitat of threatened plant and animal species.