

Where Does Chocolate Come From?

Chocolate that we eat starts with cacao trees, also called cocoa trees. Cacao trees grow in a warm climate like Central and South America, Africa or parts of Asia. This tree produces a seed pod and cocoa beans are the seeds inside the pod. Cocoa beans eventually become chocolate.



At the chocolate factory, the beans are cleaned and then they are roasted for up to 2 hours in large rotating drums. The cocoa beans tumble in these drums like clothes in a clothes dryer. As they dry, the beans turn to a rich brown color.

After roasting, the shell of the cocoa bean is removed and the inside of the cocoa beans are then ground by heavy steel plates. This grinding process forms a chocolate liquid. When chocolate liquid is molded and cooled, the product is called unsweetened or bitter chocolate. Sometimes the chocolate liquid is made into dry cocoa powder. When cocoa is made, oil from the cocoa bean is pressed out and is known as cocoa butter.

Add sugar, cocoa butter, and vanilla flavoring to unsweetened chocolate and you have a chocolate candy. If you also add milk, the product is milk chocolate.

Next the milk chocolate mixture goes through heating and cooling cycles before being molded. Finally it is molded into milk chocolate candy bars or it is made into ten-pound blocks of chocolate that are sold to other candy bar manufacturers.