

How is chocolate made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Chocolate is a food made from roasted and ground cocoa beans, the seeds of the cacao tree. Most cocoa for chocolate is grown in West Africa, and Ivory Coast and Ghana together supply about 60 per cent of the world's cocoa. The journey from pod to bar happens in two places: on the farm and in the factory.

On the farm

1. **Harvest.** Ripe cocoa pods are cut from the tree with a machete or knocked down with a stick. Beans from unripe pods have less cocoa butter and sugar, which harms the flavour.
2. **Ferment.** The beans and the pulp around them are piled up or put in bins. Yeasts, lactic acid bacteria and acetic acid bacteria ferment them for up to seven days, which creates the substances that later give chocolate its taste.
3. **Dry.** The beans are dried to stop mould, where the weather allows by spreading them in the sun for five to seven days.

In the factory

1. **Clean, roast and grade.** Twigs, stones and other debris are removed, and the beans are roasted and graded.
2. **Shell.** The shell of each bean is removed to leave the nib.
3. **Grind.** The nibs are ground into chocolate liquor, which can also be pressed to separate cocoa butter from cocoa powder. Coenraad van Houten patented the hydraulic press that made this possible in 1828.
4. **Mix.** Sugar is added to make sweet chocolate, and milk to make milk chocolate. Chocolate made with cocoa butter but not the rest of the cocoa solids is white chocolate.
5. **Conche.** The chocolate is mixed and ground in a warm machine called a conche until the cocoa and sugar particles are about 20 micrometres, smaller than the tongue can detect. Before conching, chocolate feels gritty. Traditional conching could take up to 78 hours; modern machines can finish a multi tonne batch in under 12. Rodolphe Lindt invented the conche in 1879: see [Rodolphe Lindt and the conche](#)
6. **Temper.** Cocoa butter can set in six different crystal forms, and only one, Form V, gives chocolate its snap, gloss and stable texture. Tempering encourages that form and removes the others.
7. **Mould.** Finally the tempered chocolate is moulded into bars, chips and other shapes.

What British law says chocolate is

In England, the Cocoa and Chocolate Products Regulations 2003 reserve these names for products that meet minimum recipes:

| Name | Minimum content | |---|---| | Chocolate | 35 per cent dry cocoa solids, including 18 per cent cocoa butter | | Milk chocolate | 25 per cent dry cocoa solids and 14 per cent dry milk solids, with 3.5 per cent milk fat | | Family milk chocolate | 20 per cent dry cocoa solids and 20 per cent dry milk solids, with 5 per cent milk fat | | White chocolate | 20 per cent cocoa butter and 14 per cent dry milk solids, with 3.5 per cent milk fat |

A long running dispute between Britain on one side and Belgium and France on the other, over British chocolate made with vegetable fats, ended in 2000 with rules allowing up to 5 per cent vegetable fats in clearly labelled products.

Keeping it

Chocolate keeps best at 15 to 17°C with humidity below 50 per cent, wrapped and away from strong smelling foods. If it gets too warm or too damp, it can bloom, turning whitish on the surface. Bloomed chocolate is safe to eat: see [why does chocolate go white?](#)

The people behind it

In 1847 Fry's of Bristol made what is often called the first chocolate bar, and in Switzerland Daniel Peter invented milk chocolate using condensed milk from his neighbour Henri Nestlé: see [Joseph Fry and the first chocolate bar](#) and [Henri Nestlé, Daniel Peter and the first milk chocolate](#). The farms are another story. In 1908 a report by a Cadbury agent described conditions on Portuguese cocoa plantations in Africa as de facto slavery, and child labour in cocoa growing is still a live issue: see [child labour and the cocoa trade](#)

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