

Part One: Introduction....



The name seems to fit the commodity - the word "chocolate" sounds firm, brittle, with the "crack" of breaking chocolate before melting into the "l" sound.

While thinking about the word's ancestry, it's necessary to recall that most of the world now thinks of chocolate always being combined with sugar and made into a confection.



This was not always so. Unknown outside America until the mid 16th century, the flavor of the cacao bean infused in hot water was rather bitter, which was how Spanish explorers first encountered it and subsequently took the beans to Spain.

Variations developed there - adding cinnamon or vanilla, sometimes sweetening and sometimes not. The popularity of this hot drink spread widely throughout Europe. Adding condensed milk and firming fats did not begin until the 19th century, when solid confectionery chocolate as we know it now, was developed.

Part Two: Where did the word 'chocolate' come from?

Some scholars believe that in its place of origin the ancient name for chocolate was xocoatl meaning "bitter water," originating from the Aztec language called Nahuatl.

But there is dispute about this - since the Nahuatl language appears not to contain that exact word. Chocolate historians Sophie and Michael Coe believe that Spanish conquerors living in America loved to drink chocolate but resisted the Spanish pronunciation of the Aztec word. Spoken in Spanish it had a "caca" sound at the beginning - reminiscent of the universal children's word for excrement, thus rather unwelcome in elegant society... especially when describing something brown.

To overcome this social disability, a sound from another American language - Mayan - drifted into use to make the original Nahuatl word somewhat more respectable-sounding. 'Choco,' (Mayan for 'hot') slid into use to replace the sound 'caca,' (Nahuatl for 'bitter').



Part Three: Words Words Words...

There are lots of words connected with chocolate. Which ones do you recognize?

Nouns: *chocolate, milk chocolate, white chocolate, cocoa, chockie, choc-bar, chocoholic, cocoa butter, cocoa solids, hot chocolate, iced chocolate, chocolate éclair, devil's food cake, ganache, mocha, sacher torte, chocolatier...*

(Remember: "chocolate" is uncountable, but "chocolates" - as in "a box of chocolates" - are countable.)

Adjectives: *chocolaty or chocolatey, and the interesting chocolate-box - which means being overly sentimental or cutely pretty (for example a photo of a chocolate Labrador with large, sad eyes).*

Part Four: Questions Questions Questions????

Here are some general knowledge questions.

- Which are the top three chocolate eating countries in the world (per capita)? Choose from these countries.
 - The USA
 - Norway
 - Germany
 - Brazil
 - Switzerland
 - Belgium
 - The United Kingdom
- What did the Aztecs add to their hot chocolate drink?
 - sugar
 - chili
 - vanilla
- How many cups of hot chocolate a day did the Aztec emperor Montezuma drink?
 - 1
 - 15
 - 50
- When did the first hot chocolate cafe open in London?
 - 1657
 - 1757
 - 1857



Part Five: Did You Know?

Did you know that chocolate...

- * contains 'phenylethylamine' (try pronouncing that quickly), a chemical which is produced by the brain when you fall in love?
- * contains iron? (Now you have a good excuse to eat it, you need to keep your strength up!)
- * contains vitamin B? (A stress relieving vitamin. Every busy teacher needs to manage stress, so eat up!)
- * is a vegetable? (Remember your mother told you to eat plenty of vegetables!)

Word Puzzle: How many English words can you make using the word 'phenylethylamine'?

For more on chocolate, including its health benefits, see the Instant Lessons [Chocolate Help](#) and [A Slab of Health](#).

Regards,
Max. Vocab.



The Answers:

- First Switzerland, and joint second Norway and the United Kingdom, 2. Chili pepper, 3. 50, 4. 1657

