The Theobroma ("food of the gods" in Greek) or cacao tree is native to the Amazon Basin. Human consumption dates back 4,000 years to the pre-Olmec people of Mesoamerica.

The Mayans made XOCOLATL, a thick bitter drink, from GROUND CACAO, WATER, CORN, and SPICES.

During the Aztec Empire, cocoa beans were used as currency, and only eaten once their quality degraded.

The Aztec Emperor MONTEZUMA is said to have consumed 50 GOLDEN GOBLETS of hot chocolate every day.

In the 1500s, Spanish friars introduced chocolate to Europe. With the addition of sugar, it became enormously popular, although some condemned it as a "drink for pigs" and an "inflamer of passions."

Today, Africa grows 70% of the world's cocoa.

The US is the biggest importer of cocoa beans, and the second-biggest exporter of chocolate candy, after the European Union.

Rainforest Alliance certification covers 240,000+ COCOA FARMS, 2,450,000 ACRES (990,000 ha) of cropland in 15 COUNTRIES.

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE CERTIFIED COCOA PRODUCTION:

- 2010: 10K
- 2011: 20K
- 2012: 30K
- 2013: 50K
- 2014: 100K

In a typical year, a cacao tree produces about 40 pods. Each pod contains 20–60 beans. 14% of the world cocoa market is Rainforest Alliance Certified.

The Rainforest Alliance works with farmers to help them efficiently grow cacao while protecting the world’s forests. Look for its seal to indicate chocolate that’s both good for people and good for the planet.

ANNUAL PER CAPITA CHOCOLATE CONSUMPTION:

1. Switzerland
2. Austria
3. Ireland
4. Germany
5. Norway
6. Japan
7. Canada
8. Belgium
9. Australia
10. Netherlands
11. USA

CHOCOLATE IS A $50 BILLION PER YEAR GLOBAL INDUSTRY.

It takes about 400 COCOA BEANS TO MAKE ONE POUND OF CHOCOLATE.

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