

Download The Chocolate Tree A Natural History Of Cacao

Chocolate has been prepared as a drink for nearly all of its history. For example, one vessel found at an Olmec archaeological site on the Gulf Coast of Veracruz, Mexico, dates chocolate's preparation by pre-Olmec peoples as early as 1750 BC. On the Pacific coast of Chiapas, Mexico, a Mokaya archaeological site provides evidence of cacao beverages dating even earlier, to 1900 BC.

About the Cacao Tree. The cacao tree (*Theobroma Cacao*) is grown in the tropics in a band between 10 to 20 degrees north and south of the equator, sometimes called the "Cocoa Belt". *Theobroma cacao*, also called the cacao tree and the cocoa tree, is a small (4–8 m (13–26 ft) tall) evergreen tree in the family Malvaceae, native to the deep tropical regions of the Americas. Its seeds, cocoa beans, are used to make chocolate liquor, cocoa solids, cocoa butter and chocolate.

Cacao: Cacao, tropical evergreen tree grown for its edible seeds. Native to lowland rainforests of South America, cacao is grown commercially in the New World tropics as well as western Africa and tropical Asia. Learn more about the cacao plant and its cultivation in this article.