

Chocolate for all occasions!

Chocolate is a very popular gift around the world for many different occasions. Why is chocolate so popular and where does it come from originally?

Chocolate, which is made from cocoa beans, was a spicy drink before becoming a food. The first people to drink it were the people of Central America and Mexico thousands of years ago. The Aztecs used the drink as part of their religious ceremonies and people say the Aztec Emperor Montezuma drank fifty cups of chocolate each day! They also used cocoa beans as a form of currency. For example, you could buy a rabbit for 10 cocoa beans and a slave for 100.

Spanish explorers brought cocoa beans to Europe in the 16th century, but only rich people could drink chocolate because it was expensive to import the cocoa beans and sugar. People didn't start to eat chocolate until about 150 years ago.

Nowadays chocolate isn't only for rich people, but for everyone. Europeans are the biggest consumers of chocolate and they mostly eat chocolate between 8.00 pm and midnight. Too much chocolate is unhealthy because it contains a lot of sugar and fat, but some scientists say eating small amounts of chocolate can be good for you. Studies suggest that eating a little dark chocolate once or twice a week can help prevent heart disease and lower your blood pressure. Dark chocolate is better for you than milk chocolate because it contains more cocoa.

You can eat or drink chocolate but you could also use it to run your car! In 2007 a team of British people drove a special truck 4,500 miles from the UK across the Sahara Desert to Timbuktu in Mali, West Africa and their truck ran on fuel made from waste chocolate!

The best news for a chocoholic is that every year a chocolate company in the United States has a competition and the prize is a chocolate hotel room! Yes, almost everything in the room is made of chocolate: the walls are covered in chocolate, the pictures on the wall are made of multicoloured chocolate pieces and even the furniture is partly covered in chocolate. The lucky winner can eat as much chocolate as they like!

Chocolate contains a chemical which your body produces naturally when you fall in love, so it's not surprising that chocolate is a popular romantic gift in many parts of the world.

1 Which paragraph in the text (1–7) talks about each of the following?

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 1 | why chocolate was expensive in Europe | paragraph _____ |
| 2 | the connection between love and chocolate | paragraph _____ |
| 3 | the origins of chocolate | paragraph _____ |
| 4 | a very different chocolate prize | paragraph _____ |
| 5 | chocolate as a present for different occasions | paragraph _____ |
| 6 | the connection between chocolate and driving | paragraph _____ |
| 7 | how eating chocolate can be good for you | paragraph _____ |

2 Read the article and decide if the sentences are true (T) or false (F). Circle the correct statements and correct those that are false.

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 1 | People ate chocolate before it became a drink. | T/F |
| 2 | Everyone started to drink chocolate in Europe in the 16 th century. | T/F |
| 3 | People eat chocolate more in the evening. | T/F |
| 4 | Eating a little milk chocolate can be good for you. | T/F |
| 5 | Some British people used fuel made from chocolate for their vehicle. | T/F |
| 6 | In the chocolate hotel room everything is made of chocolate. | T/F |

3 Match the meanings below to the following words from the text.

ceremonies	chocoholics	consumers	currency
explorers	fuel	multicoloured	spicy

- 1 with a strong hot taste (*adj*) _____
- 2 formal public events with special traditions, actions, or words (*noun*) _____
- 3 money people use in a country (*noun*) _____
- 4 people who travel to places that other people do not know much about to learn more about the places (*noun*) _____
- 5 people who buy and use goods and services (*noun*) _____
- 6 something like oil or wood that produces power when you burn it (*noun*) _____
- 7 people who love chocolate, and eat a lot of it (*noun*) _____
- 8 with several different colours (*adj*) _____

4 Complete the sentences with one word from exercise 3 above.

- 1 A team of British people used chocolate as _____ for their truck.
- 2 Chocolate was used in some religious _____ .
- 3 The first chocolate drink wasn't sweet, it was _____ .
- 4 Europeans are the biggest _____ of chocolate.
- 5 _____ would probably like to win the prize of a chocolate hotel room.
- 6 Spanish _____ brought cocoa beans to Europe.
- 7 The pictures in the chocolate hotel room are made of _____ chocolate pieces.

5 Complete the sentences with the correct prepositions.

in	for	for	of	of	on
----	-----	-----	----	----	----

- 1 Aztecs used the drink as part _____ their religious ceremonies.
- 2 Nowadays, chocolate isn't only _____ rich people.
- 3 Eating small amounts _____ dark chocolate can be good for you.
- 4 Dark chocolate is better _____ you than milk chocolate.
- 5 Their truck ran _____ fuel made from waste chocolate.
- 6 The walls are covered _____ chocolate.

6 Discuss these questions with your partner(s).

- What was the most interesting or surprising thing you learned about chocolate?
- Do you prefer to eat chocolate or drink it?
- Would you like to win the prize of a chocolate hotel room?
- When do people give chocolate as a present in your country?

Glossary

- gift** (*noun*) - something you give someone as a present, for example on their birthday
- originally** (*adv*) - at first
- slave** (*noun*) - someone who belongs by law to another person as their property
- century** (*noun*) - a period of 100 years
- import** (*verb*) - to buy a product from another country and bring it to your country
- mostly** (*noun*) - usually, most of the time, or in most situations
- unhealthy** (*adj*) - not good for your body
- contain** (*verb*) - if it contains something, that thing is a part of it
- prevent** (*verb*) - to stop something from happening
- heart disease** (*noun*) - a serious medical condition affecting your heart
- blood pressure** (*noun*) - the pressure at which blood flows from your heart around your body
- truck** (*noun*) - a large road vehicle used for carrying goods
- waste** (*adj*) - what is left of something after the good parts of it are finished
- prize** (*noun*) - something good you get for being successful in a competition