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Cacao Facts

Geography-

- East Africa is now the highest producing region of cacao
- Cacao needs shade to grow, although big industry companies have started to try to maximize profits and use direct sunlight growing methods
- Cacao is best farmed on small, no less than 25 acre, farms due to its delicate nature
- Cacao can grow to be over 8 meters tall and over 100 years old in the wild but are harvested and therefore only live to be about 60 years and grow no taller than 8 meters

Cultural Background/History-

- Earliest known use of cacao: Olmecs in 1500 B.C.
- Mayans and Aztecs used cacao as currency, for worship, and to drink.
- Spaniards invaded Mesoamerica around 1517, changing the way chocolate was made and consumed (from a spiced drink to a sweet one)
- The Industrial Revolution in the 1800s allowed new machinery and factories to develop new methods for making chocolate, including the invention of cocoa butter, solid chocolate candy, and milk chocolate.

Tradition facts-

- Cacao's use to remedy hangovers has been celebrated through festival for over 300 years.
- Dia de Los Muertos is a time for the living to celebrate the deceased through offerings presented to them on an altar in their home.
- White day is a Japanese Holiday that allows the men to respond to gifts given to them by the women on Valentine's Day.
- White day assigns different names for the types of chocolate given to a coworker, friend and Lover.

Health benefits-

- Ancient and modern doctors prescribed chocolate as a tranquilizer
- Flavonoids give cocoa a bitter taste
- The darker the chocolate the higher the cocoa content, and therefore the higher content of flavonoids
- People who consumed more cocoa products have lower blood pressure than those who refrain from eating chocolate at all