

What is Cacao?

Cacao is the seed of a fruit of an Amazonian tree that was brought to Central America during or before the time of the Olmecs. Cacao beans were so revered by the Mayans and Aztecs that they used them as money!

In 1753 Carl von Linnaeus, the 18th-century Swedish scientist, thought that cacao was so important that he named the genus and species of this tree himself. He named this tree: *Theobroma cacao*, which literally means "cacao, the food of the gods."

Cacao beans contain no sugar and between 12% and 50% fat depending on variety and growth conditions. Sunfood Nutrition™ cacao beans are around 40% fat content (low compared to other nuts). There is no evidence to implicate cacao bean consumption with obesity.

Magnesium

Cacao is remarkably rich in magnesium.

Cacao seems to be the #1 source of magnesium of any food. This is likely the primary reason women crave chocolate during the menstrual period. Magnesium balances brain chemistry, builds strong bones, and is associated with more happiness. Magnesium is the most deficient major mineral on the Standard American Diet (SAD); over 80% of Americans are chronically deficient in Magnesium!

Stimulant or Superfood?

Cacao contains subtle amounts of caffeine and theobromine. However, experiments have shown that these stimulants are far different when consumed raw than cooked.

Consider the following: Experimental provings of chocolate by homeopaths indicate its stimulating effect when cooked. One experiment conducted with a decoction of roasted ground cacao beans in boiling water produced an excitement of the nervous system similar to that caused by black coffee, an excited state of circulation, and an accelerated pulse. Interestingly, when the same decoction was made with raw, unroasted beans neither effect was noticeable, leading the provers to conclude that the physiological changes were caused by aromatic substances released during roasting.

MAO Inhibitors

Cacao seems to diminish appetite, probably due to its monoamine oxidase enzyme inhibitors (MAO inhibitors) - these are different from digestive enzyme inhibitors found in most nuts and seeds. These rare MAO inhibitors actually produce favorable results when consumed by allowing more serotonin and other neurotransmitters to circulate in the brain. According to Dr. Gabriel Cousens, MAO inhibitors facilitate youthening and rejuvenation.

Phenylethylamine (PEA)

Phenylethylamine (PEA) is found in chocolate. PEA is an adrenal-related chemical that is

also created within the brain and released when we are in love. This is one of the reasons why love and chocolate have a deep correlation. PEA also plays a role in increasing focus and alertness.

Anandamide (The Bliss Chemical)

A neurotransmitter called anandamide, has been isolated in cacao. Anandamide is also produced naturally in the brain. Anandamide is known as "The Bliss Chemical" because it is released while we are feeling great. Cacao contains enzyme inhibitors that decrease our bodies' ability to breakdown anandamide. This means that natural anandamide and/or cacao anandamide may stick around longer, making us feel good longer, when we eat cacao.

Allergies?

A recent study showed that only one out of 500 people who thought they were allergic to chocolate actually tested positive. Allergies to chocolate are quite rare. It is typically the case that the person is in fact allergic to milk and dairy products.

What to do with Cacao Nibs?:

1. Try eating them straight, a tablespoon at a time. Chew thoroughly and experience the taste extravaganza of raw chocolate.
2. Add to coconut-based or fruit-based smoothies to enhance the flavor.
3. Add agave nectar or honey or another sweetening agent to the raw cacao nibs and chew!
4. Freeze cacao nibs with sweeteners (agave nectar or honey are fantastic). Eat cold.
5. Blend cacao nibs into herbal teas with the Peruvian superfood maca.
6. Add cacao nibs to raw ice creams for the best chocolate chips in the world.
7. Create a raw chocolate bar! Blend the following raw ingredients together: cacao nibs, agave nectar, carob powder, maca, coconut oil, calcium, and cashews. Pour into a mold and freeze. Eat cold and experience the truth about the food of the gods!