

## Chocolate Elixir Crafting : A Workshope in the Teaching Kitchen with / Denis Manzer

### How Chocolate Came to Be Loved By the Whole World: A Hint of Chocolate's History

The history of cacao and humanity is a deeply intertwined one. Enjoyed by the peoples of the New World since time immemorial, the story of the phenomenal spread of Chocolate to the whole world is matched by very few plants!

Cacao made it's first impressions upon the Old World when Spanish Conquistadores led by Hernan Cortes made the dramatic discovery of the Aztec civilization and it's capital city Tenochtitlan, where present day Mexico City stands today. There are some interesting facts about the Aztecs that we should pay attention to:

+This wondrous pyramid city was flourishing with a population more numerous than any European city of the day!

+ The Spanish were astounded to find that the Aztec Emperor Montezuma had treasure vaults overflowing not with gold, but with Cacao Beans!

+They were also surprised by the remarkable vigour and robust health of Montezuma. In his fifties, he had the appearance of a Young Man in his prime, where in Europe people of that age were Aged! The Emperor is rumoured to have been consuming 40 cups of Chocolate Drink a night, and visiting his Harem of many women!

+ The Spanish immediately adopted Cacao! As Hernan Cortes the Conquistadore himself wrote of Cacao: "The Divine Drink, which builds up resistance and fights fatigue. A cup of this precious drink permits a man to walk a whole day without food."<sup>1</sup>

And so here we have touched upon the important lesson of this workshope: Cacao was traditionally always consumed as a beverage! Our word Chocolate in fact has it's origins in the Aztec word Xocol-Atl, meaning Foaming Water. Europeans, in their centuries long history of enjoying chocolate, have also enjoyed Cacao as a beverage until only relatively recently! Cacao consumed as a beverage provides greater absorbability & digestibility and therefore has a greater effect upon the human body!

Let us explore together the wonderful traditional preparations of Chocolate as a beverage, as well as the medicinal qualities they bestow upon us!

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<sup>1</sup> David Wolfe, Naked Chocolate, Rawcreation Ltd., 2005, p18

## **Medicinal Health Benefits of Consuming Cacao (*Theobroma cacao*): The Food of the Gods**

(From David Wolfe's *Naked Chocolate*)<sup>2</sup>

Cacao is the most complex food known to man, boasting a larger profile of nutritive elements as well as medicinal compounds than anything yet discovered.

Nutritive Qualities:

- ❖ Magnesium: Therapeutic Levels
  - Relaxes Muscles Increases Brain Power Increases Flexibility Supports the Heart Builds Strong Bones Increases Alkalinity Strengthens Peristalsis (Bowel Movements)
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The Richness of Cacao in Magnesium may be responsible for Chocolates Beneficial effect upon the Vigour of our Heart. Interestingly Cacao was know by the Mayans as “Heart’s Blood!” The Heart is one of the largest organs of the body! The relaxation of the tension held in the heart muscle may be how chocolate produces a “heart-opening” effect

- ❖ Anti-Oxidants: Dramatically Richer in Phenolic Anti-Oxidants, Flavonoids such as those found in Red Wine etc, than most other Foods! These are known to be Beneficial to the Cardio-Vascular system, providing protection to the Heart and Circulatory Systems. “Heart’s Blood” Indeed!
- ❖ Amino-Acids: Cacao provides a Phenomenal Protein Profile. It is rich in Arginine, which is known to increase Blood Flow to the Reproductive System and Amplify Sexual Desire! Also Cacao is an excellent source of the amino acid Tryptophan, responsible for the production of Serotonin, Diminishing Anxiety and Increasing our Ability to fend off Stress!
- ❖ A source of Many Minerals, Such as Iron and Zinc

Medicinal Compounds:

Theobromeine:

-Stimulating (It is a Xanthine Alkaloid Related to Caffeine)! -Gently Stimulates Central Nervous System -Relaxes Smooth Muscles Dilates Blood Vessels

Phenylethylamine (P.E.A) : The Love Molecule!

-Cacao is one of the Few Foods containing this substance produced naturally in our brains when feeling Excitement, Euphoria, Sexual Arousal & Orgasm! Produces Increased Mental Concentration, Ability to Pay Attention and Stay Alert! Promotes a Positive Attitude & Feelings of Joy!

Anandamine: The “Bliss Chemical”

-Responsible for the “Runner’s High”, produced naturally in our Brain to cope with stress of prolonged exercise! -Responsible for regulation of our mood, memory, appetite, pain perception, emotion & cognition! Interacts with the cannabinoid receptor sites in our brain!

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<sup>2</sup> David Wolfe, *Naked Chocolate*, Rawcreation Ltd., 2005

# Mayan Hot Cacao Elixir Recipe

For 1 L of Hot Cacao (serves 4~):

In a Blender combine the Following Ingredients:

- 1 Liter of **Steaming Hot Water** (Hot Enough to Melt Chocolate)
- 4 Finger-Fulls of **Cacao Paste** (8 Tablespoons) (Use your Judgement and Personal Preference)
- 1 teaspoon **Cayenne Chili Pepper**
- 1 teaspoon **Vanilla Powder**
- ½ Teaspoon **Good Quality Salt**
- 4 Tablespoons **Raw Honey** (Optional: The Mayans Drank Their Chocolate Bitter!)

Blend For A Few Moments Until The Mixture Achieves a Foaming Consistency! Enjoy!

## Medicinal Qualities of the Elixir:

**Cacao Paste:** The Essential Ingredient. 100% Cacao ground until it will melt! Creates a magnificently thick, foaming consistency!

**Cayenne Chili (Capsicum annuum)** : Fiery Cayenne Chili Peppers Potentiates the Chocolate, so that more Cacao can efficiently enter into the Bloodstream! Cayenne is usually always traditionally incorporated into Cacao Drinks for Good Reason. (As we shall see, Herbs with similar actions can be used for similar results.)

Herbal Actions<sup>3</sup> :

+Circulatory Stimulant +Digestive Stimulant +Carminative +Alterative +Expectorant +Diuretic  
+Analgesic (Pain Relieving)

**Vanilla Bean (Vanilla planifolia):** Inseparable from Chocolate, the flavour of Vanilla is always present in what we consider to be chocolate! It has Many Medicinal Qualities Above and Beyond it's Flavour:<sup>4</sup>

+Anti-Oxidant +Aids Digestion +Reduces Inflammation +Improves Mental Performance +Aphrodisiac

Cacao Elixirs, as we can see, are in fact Medicinal Delivery Systems. That is, you can incorporate any medicinal herbs you wish, and enjoy them in a method that your body actually enjoys, and therefore absorbs more readily! Let us Explore Some Other Recipes to give you some ideas of what you can Create!

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<sup>3</sup>Dr. Frawley & Dr. Vasant Lad, *The Yoga of Herbs: An Ayurvedic Guide to Herbal Medicine*, Lotus Press, 2001,

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bulletproofexec.com/using-vanilla-to-increase-your-mental-performance/>

# Brave New World Cacao Elixir Recipe

(European Style Chocolate Drinking)

When Cacao Came to Europe, Immediately people began to incorporate Medicinal Spices and Herbs that they enjoyed with Their Hot Chocolates. As we shall see, the herbs that they chose do indeed synergize with and potentiate Cacao, just as Cayenne Chili does! With a roughly 500 year history of chocolate drinking amongst Europeans, we can say with conviction that drinking chocolate is a part of our evolutionary history! We are who we are today thanks to the drinking of this divine drink!

For 1 L of Hot Cacao (serves 4~):

In a Blender combine the Following Ingredients:

- 1 Liter of **Steaming Hot Herbal Decoction of Your Choice**(Hot Enough to Melt Chocolate)
- 4 Finger-Fulls of **Cacao Paste (8 Tablespoons)** (Use your Judgement and Personal Preference)
- 1 Teaspoon **Vanilla Powder or Extract**
- ½ Teaspoon **Good Quality Salt**
- 1 Teaspoon **Raw Ginger Powder** (To Taste)
- 1 Teaspoon **True Cinnamon Powder** (To Taste)
- 1 Teaspoon **Cloves Powder**(To Taste)
- 1 Teaspoon **Nutmeg Powder** (To Taste)
- 4 Tablespoons **Raw Honey** or Sweetener of Your Choice!

Blend For A Few Moments Until The Mixture Achieves a Foaming Consistency! Enjoy!

## Medicinal Qualities of the Elixir:

### Ginger

Herbal Actions and Energetics<sup>5</sup>:

+Analgesic	+AntiFungal	+Circulatory Stimulant
+Anthelmintic	+Anti-Inflammatory	+Diaphoretic
+Anti-Arthritic	+Anti-Spasmodic	+Elastase Inhibitor
+Anti-Bacterial	+Anti-Tussive	+Hypotensive
+Anti-Diarrheal	+Anti-Viral	+Immune Stimulant
+Anti-Emetic	+Carminative	<b>+Synergist</b>

As you can see, Ginger is a Powerful Medicine! It's effects to potentiate Chocolate are much the same as Cayenne Pepper, as well as the other herbs in this Elixir. As Stephen Harrod Buhner sums it up excellently: "Ginger is a **Synergist**, increasing the actions of other herbs & boosting their effectiveness by relaxing blood vessels & increasing circulation, thus carrying the active constituents of the other herbs more efficiently throughout the Body<sup>6</sup>."

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen Harrod Buhner, *Herbal Antibiotics*, Storey Publishing, 2012, p231

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Harrod Buhner, *Herbal Antibiotics*, Storey Publishing, 2012, p231

## Cinnamon

Medicinal Qualities and Actions<sup>7</sup>:

**+Circulatory Stimulant** +Diaphoretic +Carminative +Alterative +Expectorant +Diuretic +Analgesic

## Cloves

Medicinal Qualities and Actions<sup>8</sup>:

**+Circulatory Stimulant** +Expectorant +Carminative +Analgesic +Aphrodisiac

## In Conclusion: Brave New World

As we have explored, Drinking Cacao is one of the great foods that are medicine on the Earth! Not only does Cacao possess tremendous healing power of it's own, it is also the ultimate method to deliver other medicinal herbs in an agreeable way into our bodies! The Possibilities are Infinite! Hopefully, now we have the power to create our own Cacao Elixirs incorporating the medicines that our bodies need! One of the greatest benefits of consuming Cacao for our health is that it is also good for the Health of the Earth Mama. Cacao loves to grow in a healthy, Bio-Diverse Environment. By purchasing Cacao, as well as the other Indigenous Foods we have discussed, you are ensuring that the abundance of the Earth Mother shall continue for Posterity! Cacao For our Children's Children!

## References:

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<sup>7</sup> Dr. Frawley & Dr. Vasant Lad, *The Yoga of Herbs: An Ayurvedic Guide to Herbal Medicine*, Lotus Press, 2001, p112

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Frawley & Dr. Vasant Lad, *The Yoga of Herbs: An Ayurvedic Guide to Herbal Medicine*, Lotus Press, 2001, p112