

# CRUNCH TIME

## Chocolate: From Pod To Bar



### **EQUIPMENT:**

- Chocolate pod
- Cocoa beans
- Cocoa nibs
- Container of cocoa mass
- Container of cocoa butter
- Common bar of chocolate

## METHOD:

1. The chocolate that we're familiar with in the shops is derived from the cocoa tree.
2. Cocoa trees are originally from Central and South America, but are now also grown in Africa, Indonesia and even Queensland, Australia.
3. Bumpy, oblong, melon-like fruit pods grow on the cocoa tree and, depending on the variety, are green, red or vivid purples which change to golden yellow, orange and brown as the fruit matures.
4. These cocoa pods are split open to reveal the fruit within: cocoa beans surrounded by a sweet, sour, slightly citrus tasting pulp. These are fermented in purpose-built wooden boxes for five to six days to separate the pulp from the bean and develop aroma.
5. The cocoa beans are then spread out and left in the sun for another six days to stop the fermentation and eliminate most of their moisture content.
6. The next step is referred to as winnowing: the beans are dried quickly under heaters and then agitated to get rid of their husk, leaving behind what are known as "cocoa nibs". These nibs are then roasted.
7. Grinding down the cocoa nibs produces a fine liquid mass known as cocoa liquor. This is the base of cocoa butter and cocoa powder– the key components of chocolate. Cocoa butter is the fat content of the cocoa bean, and cocoa powder is the remaining content.
8. The chocolate liquor is then refined by rolling it between two rollers to form a fine chocolate powder known as chocolate flakes.
9. The flakes then undergo the process of "conching" where they are kneaded for several hours until the aromas are fully developed.
10. At the end of the conching, cocoa butter and emulsifiers like soy lecithin are added to control the viscosity. The result is now referred to as liquid chocolate.
11. The final elements such as sugar, milk powder or vanilla are then added to finalise the overall flavour of the chocolate.
12. A controlled heating and cooling of the chocolate, known as tempering, then takes place to stabilise the crystals within and achieve a shiny, solid uniform product.
13. Finally, in its myriad of forms and recipes, chocolate bars are born.

