



Chocolate: Riches from the Rainforest

Robert Burleigh

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Few children (and few adults) know the fascinating history of chocolate. Found in tropical rainforests, the seeds of the cacao tree played an important role in the rituals of the Maya and the Aztecs. Then Cortes took them across the Atlantic, where chocolate became a fad with the smart sets of Spain and all of Europe. Finally chocolate traveled back to the Americas to become a treat for everyone. Kids will be thrilled to learn how the Aztecs served sacrificial victims a special drink, made of chocolate - mixed with blood. And they'll learn why the Spanish coined the word "chocolate" - they modified other words to avoid calling the tasty new drink "cacalate." They'll also discover how years of drinking chocolate as a fatty, frothy beverage finally gave way to the creation of solid chocolate, ready to become bars, chips, brownies, and other goodies (but first people tried mixing it with cheese). Did you know that all the Tootsie Roll factories in the world produce more than 49 million Tootsie Rolls every day? Did you know that you couldn't buy chocolate in the summer until after about 1915, when refrigeration became available to businesses? Did you know that American soldiers carry chocolate as part of their rations - and have ever since World War I? Chocolate is both entertaining and informative. Lavishly illustrated and meticulously researched, Chocolate accompanies a major exhibition at The Field Museum, Chicago that will travel to ten other venues over five years.

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