Fine Chocolate

Chocolate is produced from raw cocoa beans in a multi-stage process. The beans are roasted, then peeled and ground into flour that contains cocoa butter, which is extracted; the remainder is ground into fine cocoa powder. The principal ingredients of chocolate are cocoa powder, cocoa butter, and sugar. The quality of the beans, the roasting technique, and the percentage of cocoa butter contribute to the quality of the chocolate. In Belgium and Switzerland – the two countries that produce the world's best chocolate – the percentage of cocoa butter is between 35% and 50%.

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The Belgians are at the forefront of fresh chocolate production, which is considered the pinnacle of chocolate-making because of its outstanding pure cocoa content and lack of preservatives that ensure a fresh, sweet taste. Supposedly, the most prestigious fresh chocolate treat is marzipan – made from pure fresh almonds pureed with sugar – covered with premium chocolate. This type of sweet was not intended for ordinary people but as a gift for British and French nobles. Each year, Belgium produces 660 thousand tons of chocolate, of which about 450 thousand are exported, so, on average, each Belgian eats about six pounds of chocolate per year – a most unhealthy diet.

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What are the ingredients of chocolate?

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What is marzipan?

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How much chocolate do Belgians eat each year?