



**Botanical name:** *Theobroma cacao*

**Family:** Malvaceae/Mallows [including cotton, hibiscus, linden, marshmallow, hollyhock, Chinese parasol tree]

**Common name:** Cacao

**More names:** chocolate, cocoa [chocolate powder], *kakauakuauitl*, *cacahuatl*, *chocolatyl* [Nahuatl + "Mexican" native tongues], *ka'kau* [Mayan], *ela* [Yoruba]

**Parts of the plant used:** seed/beans, leaves, bark, pulp

**When to harvest:** pods develop continuously, usually picked in June and December when they are cut open + allowed to ferment or using a drying method making it easy to separate the seeds.

**Herbal actions:**

[seeds] stimulant, antioxidant, immunomodulant, bronchodilator, cardiogenic, astringent, aphrodisiac, appetite stimulant, anti-anemic, antiinflammatory, antihypertensive, anti-diabetic, anti-cholesterol, antidepressant, nutritive

[leaves] anticancer, antioxidant

[oil] emollient

**Active constituents:**

[seeds] theobromine [identical to caffeine], anthocyanins, phenylethylamine, tyramine, tryptamine, serotonin, oleic fatty acids, stearic, palmitic, sucrose, glucose, fructose, copper, magnesium, iron

**Habitat + ecology:**

Our cacao tree ancestor is known by First Nations, the humans who lived here before Columbus in Central America and its origin is attributed to Mexico, extending to the entire Amazon basin. It is cultivated in all tropical regions. They are presently grown around the world, usually in large plantations under the shade of other trees such as banana.

**Energy:** Warming

**Taste:** Bitter

**Meridian/Organ affected:**

**Ethnobotany (People + the plant ancestor):**

- It is historically contested when cacao traveled from their believed origin of the northern Amazonia to Mesoamerica.
- The earliest presence of cacao in the human experience is earlier than 1000 BC as indicated by remnants left in pottery found in Honduras, while their presence is extensively documented in Olmec, Maya, and Aztec civilizations as early as 600 BC.
- Cacao is an intrinsic part of ancient Maya and so called Aztec life, as a beverage or food, but as a basis of our economies and an integral part of our spiritual beliefs.
- Cacao is depicted in the sacred text of Popol Vuh or Book of Counsel, in one story, the severed head of a god is hung on a cacao tree. Another page depicts the maize god sprouting from a cacao pod. Cacao is our giver of life and sustenance itself.
- In Mexico, Mixtec, Zapotec, Maya + countless of Mexican native communities worked with the sacred seeds of cacao in many forms:
  - As a form of currency, and in some places in Mexico that is still the case
  - Ceremonially to stimulate the connection with the Divine + increase psychic abilities
  - A food source
  - As beverages used in virtually all social and ritual occasions; a traditional preparation method involves the fermentation of cacao seeds, then drying, toasting [optional], grinding, and finally mixing with water to form a suspension

- Used cacao flowers to treat fatigue + build up immune resistance
- A prescription of cacao beans, maize and the herb *tlacoxochitl* [*Calliandra anomala*] to alleviate fever and panting of breath and to treat the faint of heart [Florentine Codex, 1590]
- A majority of the cacao production is actively [harming and destroying Africa's Ivory coast](#). We much decolonize our relationship with cacao and invite their spirit in more and more ethical ways, because their blood + neocolonization in ignorant consumption.

### Plant magick:

- Associated with the Land of the Dead, red bloods, and the guardian Mictlantecuhtli
- Wakes the subconscious mind, increasing our capacity to access our psychic abilities, visions
- Supportive in journeying outside o capacities to transcend the limitations of this realm
- Stimulates brain function, supportive with accessing lost memories
- Opens the heart and allows for a deeper, authentic love based connection with yourself, others, the world and all of life
- Helps bring awareness to anything that has been preventing you from creating the life you love
- Brings recognition + tools to release repetitive patterns
- Connection to Higher Self//You gotta feel it to heal it
- Offers a state of stillness
- Enhances creativity
- Balancing to our multiple expressions of Self

Form: tea, spirit, flower essence, spirit bath, CEREMONY

### Medicinal uses:

- Incredibly nutritive to the physical body
  - Improving appetite, supporting with the integration of nutrients into the body, including iron
  - May support with weigh managing; + regulating the use of energy, reducing appetite and inflammation and increasing fat oxidation and feelings of fullness
- Increases the overall function of our immune + endocrine systems, keepers of our general + long-term health
  - Clearing + preventing of infections caused by colonizing bacteria and viruses
- Reducing inflammation, better blood flow, lower blood pressure + improving cholesterol and blood sugar levels
  - Aiding diabetes [especially Type 2], high cholesterol, and heart conditions
- Increases blood flow, which nourishes all organs + brings oxygen to them relieving inflammation + stresses throughout the body
- Anti-cancer due to their antioxidant effects, protection of cells against damage from reactive molecules, fight inflammation, as they inhibit cell growth, induce cancer cell death and help prevent the spread of cancer cells
  - Especially reducing breast, pancreatic, prostate, liver and colon cancer, as well as leukemia cancer symptoms
- Treats heart conditions + strengthens the the heart
  - By reducing oxidation of low-cholesterol, which causes coronary diseases, + slowing coagulation
- Improving brain function, including creating new brain cells, supporting memory and focus
- Positive impact on age-related mental degeneration
- Improve mood and symptoms of depression
  - Their flavanols, convert tryptophan [an amino acid] to the natural mood stabilizer serotonin + their caffeine content or simply the sensory pleasure of eating chocolate
- Supportive to folx living with asthma thanks to their anti-asthmatic compounds, such as theobromine and theophylline, easing the inflammation of the airways
- Orally treats many other conditions, including liver, bladder, and kidney disease
- Topically eases + prevents skin wrinkles

**+contraindication:** work with in moderation during pregnancy. Long term use is safe!

### Recipes + Comrades

*The possibilities are endless, if this*

### Preparation:

- Tea, infusion, decoction, elixir, tincture, fermented drink, food,

spirit calls you begin the journey + share what you are learning.

food, food

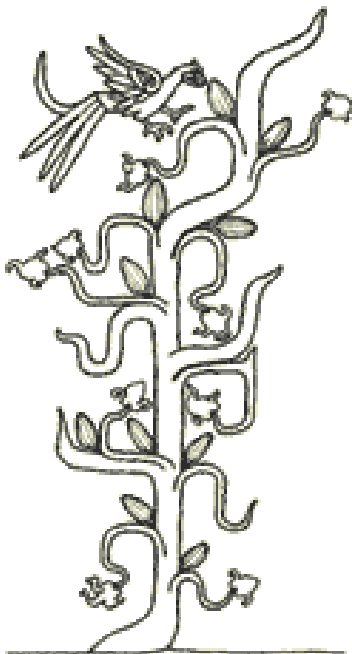
**Recommended dosage:**

- No specific dose, but 30-100g is usually a good dose of raw cacao

**Photos of the plant ancestor:**



a mayan glyph for cacao



Cacao tree detail from a Mayan mural at Cacaxtla, Mexico, 9th century



The flower god (K'uh/Ahaw? Nik) sits between two cacao plants. Above his head is a quetzal bird. Drawing after Villacorta C. and Villacorta (1976:364).

