



Chocolate in Germany.

From medicine to children's confectionery.

It was only in the 17th century that chocolate arrived in what was then the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. As in the rest of Europe, it was of course initially reserved for the nobility and royalty.

The common people mainly consumed chocolate for medicinal purposes. Advertised in pharmacies as "health chocolate", it was sold at high prices in its pure form or with additives as a medicine and tonic.

In 1673, the first coffeehouse also selling chocolate opened in Bremen, though a 10% tax on luxury goods meant it was still very expensive.

It was not until the start of the 19th century that chocolate became affordable, partly as customs duties and taxes were no longer levied on cocoa, or were reduced, and partly as local beet sugar was used to make the chocolate instead of expensive imported cane sugar. As industrialization took hold, Dresden became the heart of German chocolate production, with not one, but four chocolate corporations founded in the city.



Cornelius Bontekoe

From 1840 on, chocolate was not only enjoyed as a drink, but increasingly, also, in the form of bars. Drinking chocolate was associated in people's minds with wasteful courtly life, which did not suit the new bourgeoisie. Coffee replaced cocoa as the most popular hot drink, while chocolate, in the form of bars, increasingly became a sweet treat for women and children.

The range of chocolate products and producers mushroomed. Brand names such as Stollwerck or Hachez gained in importance while, in Switzerland, the big Suchard, Toblerone and Lindt chocolate factories sprang up.

At the start of the 20th century, the variety of chocolate types no longer knew any boundaries: solid or liquid, blocks, bars, cocoa powder and chocolate figures. There was also an impressive range of chocolates with strawberry, mocha, vanilla, raspberry, pistachio, nut or praline fillings – something for every taste and almost every budget.