

Chocolate: More American than apple pie

Description



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As the 4th of July approaches, Americans are busy making plans for barbeques, beach time and fireworks. This is also a good time to reflect on the vision and courage of our founding fathers like Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, John Hancock and numerous others. Living history sites like Monticello, the Betsy Ross House, Mt. Vernon, Colonial Williamsburg and others give us plenty of opportunities to experience Colonial America. And while “American as apple pie” is a notable phrase, it’s actually chocolate that sustained our founding fathers in early America.

Even before we gained our independence from England, Americans were making chocolate. Physician, Dr. James Baker, and Irish immigrant, John Hannon, opened New England’s first chocolate factory in 1765 at a water-powered mill in Massachusetts. During Colonial times chocolate was most often enjoyed as a beverage. Cocoa beans were imported from the West Indies and processed into chocolate bars or tablets then grated and prepared as a drink.

Thomas Jefferson recorded his first purchase of chocolate in 1775. In a letter to John Adams dated November 27, 1785, he wrote “Chocolate’s superiority both of health and nourishment will soon give it the same preference over tea and coffee in America as it has in Spain.”

Chocolate is woven throughout American history with its presence documented at early Thanksgiving feasts, as military rations in the American Revolutionary War, throughout the American colonies and as

a breakfast drink enjoyed by George and Martha Washington. After the Boston Tea Party, drinking tea was viewed as politically incorrect and chocolate became the favored beverage in the colonies.

A division of MARS Incorporated, [American Heritage Chocolate](#) has recreated chocolate in the authentic Colonial form to provide us with a taste of history in the chocolate we enjoy today. In 2003, MARS Incorporated undertook an extensive global research initiative to uncover the true history of chocolate. Rodney Snyder, Research and Development Director of the Historic Division of MARS Incorporated spearheaded the research. A decade later, he continues to bring new and innovative chocolate experiences to historic sites. “The love of chocolate connects us through time. Through partnerships with historic sites, chocoholics and history buffs alike can watch chocolate being made by hand, then taste the authentic textures and flavors for themselves in American Heritage Chocolate.”

Throughout the country, there are 170 sites offering educational presentations and hands-on demonstrations using American Heritage Chocolate. Each of these will transport you back in time to see, touch, smell and taste how chocolate was enjoyed by our founding fathers in the mid-1700s. Imagine learning more about the history of the Americas through the unique lens of chocolate. I can’t think of a tastier history lesson!

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