

Bean to Bar photo captions

A ripe cocoa pod on a tree

Cocoa farmers split the cocoa pods and scrape out the beans

Checking the fermenting beans

A farmer picks through fermented beans laid out to dry

Weighing the dried cocoa beans

Sacks of beans are loaded on to a truck ready to export

The cocoa sacks are loaded on to a ship at the port

Testing the chocolate mixture at the factory

The bars are formed at the factory

We buy the finished chocolate bars in our local shop

Bean to Bar photo descriptions



Cocoa trees grow in hot, damp climates in countries on or near the equator, such as Ghana and Brazil. After 3–5 years, each tree can produce more than 20 pods like this, which are ripe when they turn yellow.



This photo shows Comfort and her daughter Benedicta sitting in a clearing on their cocoa farm. They have already cut down the pods from the tree with the large, long knife, called a cutlass, which Comfort is holding. Comfort splits the pods with the knife and Benedicta scrapes out the sticky white beans.

Pods are harvested twice a year. The main harvest is October to February, and there is a smaller one in June/July.



Comfort has collected her beans and wrapped them in banana or plantain leaves. She needs to leave them in a warm, shady place to ferment for 5 to 7 days.

Bean to Bar photo descriptions



These beans have fermented and are beginning to turn a chocolatey brown. They have been laid out in the direct sunlight to dry on special drying racks made of locally grown bamboo. Francis Bediaku is working on the drying table, turning the beans regularly to stop them sticking together and picking out bad beans.



Once the beans are dry, farmers pack them into jute sacks and take them to the recorder, Addae Mensah Joseph. He uses his scales to check each sack weighs exactly 62.4kg and pays the farmer half of what he will earn. The other half is paid, when the cocoa is accepted by Cocobod, the government cocoa board.



Stephen Arthur and Kofi Atta, two cocoa farmers, load trucks with sacks of cocoa beans. Each truck can carry 180 sacks.



Tema is the biggest port in the country, and it's from here that most of Ghana's cocoa is exported. Containers are loaded on to ships, which carry cocoa to Europe, where it will be used to make chocolate.

Bean to Bar photo descriptions



After the beans arrive at the European port, they are taken by lorry to the chocolate factory. Here the cocoa beans are roasted and winnowed (to get rid of their shells), and turned into cocoa butter and cocoa liquor. These are then mixed together in a process called conching. Milk, sugar, vegetable oil and flavouring are mixed in at this stage to a specific and secret recipe.



Elga Vogel works at the Weinrich factory. She collects the bars which have been formed by pouring liquid chocolate into moulds, and sends them down the production line to be wrapped in Divine wrappers. They will then be transported to the UK. Cleanliness at the factory is vital, so all the workers wear plastic caps and gloves.



This is the very final stage of the chocolate chain – a stage we know well! The final link in the chain is you, the buyer. The choices you make have an influence all the way back through the chain to its very beginning, the cocoa farmer.