Flavors of Cacao Data Documentation

# Context

Chocolate is one of the most popular candies in the world. Each year, residents of the United States collectively eat more than 2.8 billion pounds. However, not all chocolate bars are created equal! This dataset contains expert ratings of over 1,700 individual chocolate bars, along with information on their regional origin, percentage of cocoa, the variety of chocolate bean used and where the beans were grown.

*Flavors of Cacao Rating System:*

5= Elite (Transcending beyond the ordinary limits)

4= Premium (Superior flavor development, character, and style)

3= Satisfactory (3.0) to praiseworthy (3.75) (well made with special qualities)

2= Disappointing (Passable but contains at least one significant flaw)

1= Unpleasant (mostly unpalatable)

Each chocolate is evaluated from a combination of both objective qualities and subjective interpretation. A rating here only represents an experience with one bar from one batch. Batch numbers, vintages and review dates are included in the database when known.

The database is narrowly focused on plain dark chocolate with an aim of appreciating the flavors of the cacao when made into chocolate. The ratings do not reflect health benefits, social missions, or organic status.

*Flavor* is the most important component of the Flavors of Cacao ratings. Diversity, balance, intensity, and purity of flavors are all considered. It is possible for a straightforward single note chocolate to rate as high as a complex flavor profile that changes throughout. Genetics, terroir, post-harvest techniques, processing and storage can all be discussed when considering the flavor component.

*Texture* has a great impact on the overall experience, and it is also possible for texture related issues to impact flavor. It is a good way to evaluate the makers vision, attention to detail and level of proficiency.

*Aftermelt* is the experience after the chocolate has melted. Higher quality chocolate will linger and be long lasting and enjoyable. Since the aftermelt is the last impression you get from the chocolate, it receives equal importance in the overall rating.

*Overall Opinion* is really where the ratings reflect a subjective opinion. Ideally it is my evaluation of whether the components above worked together and an opinion on the flavor development, character and style. It is also here where each chocolate can usually be summarized by the most prominent impressions that you would remember about each chocolate.

# Field Documentation

* Company – Name of the company manufacturing the bar
* Specific Bean Origin or Bar Name – The specific geo-region of origin for the bar
* REF – A value linked to when the review was entered in the database; Higher = more recent.
* Review Date – Date of publication of the review
* Cocoa Percent – Cocoa percentage (darkness) of the chocolate bar being reviewed
* Company Location – Manufacturer base country
* Rating – Expert rating for the bar
* Bean Type – The variety (breed) of bean used, if provided
* Broad Bean Origin – The broad geo-region of origin for the bean