Chocolate comes in many forms today. Regardless of the end product, processing begins by extracting, fermenting, drying, and roasting the cacao seeds (also called beans), removing the shell and skin, and leaving the tasty nibs.

**Cacao** refers to the unprocessed seeds of the cacao tree. Although the British sometimes use the term cocoa to refer to the plant and its seeds, in the U.S. cocoa usually refers only to the processed product.

**Chocolate liquor** refers to the nibs ground to a smooth, thick liquid or paste. Despite the name, it contains no alcohol—just the fat (cocoa butter) and solids (cocoa) of the cacao seed, in roughly equal proportions.

- **Cocoa butter** is the fat contained in the cacao seed.
- **Cocoa** is the powdery solid that’s left after most of the cocoa butter is removed from chocolate liquor.

**Baking chocolate** is a solid chocolate made from pure chocolate liquor, no sugar added.

**Bittersweet and semisweet chocolate** are the darkest eating chocolates and have at least 35% chocolate liquor.

**Sweet dark chocolate** contains 15% to 35% chocolate liquor and less than 12% milk solids. It may also contain ingredients like condensed milk, cocoa butter, sugar, and vanilla.

**Milk chocolate** is a mixture of chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, milk, sugar, and flavorings. All milk chocolate made in the U.S. contains at least 10% chocolate liquor and 12% whole milk.

**“Dutched” or “Dutch” chocolate** is made from chocolate liquor or cocoa powder that has been treated with alkaline salts to give it a darker color and a milder flavor. The process—which came to be known as “Dutching”—was invented in Holland by the chemist Coenraad Van Houten.

**White chocolate** is a blend of cocoa butter, milk, sugar, and flavorings. It contains no cocoa solids, and many people don’t consider it chocolate at all!