



HARVESTING

After ripening on the tree for 3-4 months, cacao pods are harvested by hand.

FERMENTING

At the farm, the seeds, called cacao beans, are scooped from the pods along with the surrounding pulp. They are then piled up and repeatedly turned to ferment for 2-9 days, after which they are spread out to dry. This begins to develop their chocolate flavor.

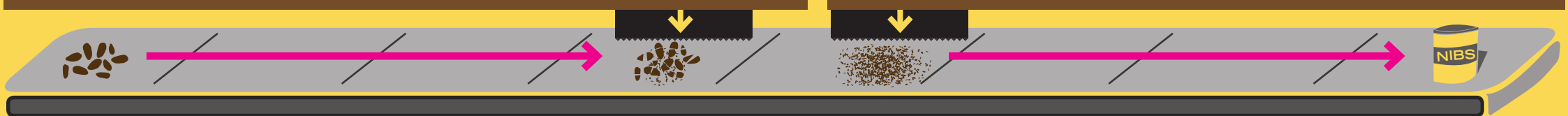


ROASTING

Dried, fermented cacao beans are shipped to chocolate processors, who gently roast the beans. This loosens the thin outer shells and further refines their flavor.

CRUSHING

Roasted beans are coarsely crushed, allowing the shells to be removed by winnowing. The broken inner kernels are called cacao, cocoa, or chocolate nibs.



GRINDING

The nibs are finely ground and warmed by friction into thick liquid called chocolate liquor, which despite its name contains no alcohol. This is molded into unsweetened baking chocolate bars.

PRESSING

Chocolate liquor is pressed and filtered to separate out most of the cocoa butter from the cocoa solids.

PULVERIZING

Dried cocoa solids are pulverized to produce cocoa powder. Natural cocoa powder is bitter, acidic, and astringent with a strong chocolate taste. To produce cocoa powder with a milder flavor and darker color that mixes better with liquids, beans are treated with an alkalizing agent before or after roasting. This results in Dutch cocoa.

