BOLIVIA

CACAO SELECTION FELCHLIN

Felchlin
SWITZERLAND

WILD CACAO: A BOLIVIAN RARITY

In the lowlands of the department of Beni, near the border with Brazil, unique «Beniano Silvestre» wild cacao grows wherever slight, natural elevations occur. There is often a lot of standing water in the region following heavy rainfall, as the terrain is flat and basically resembles a steppe or savannah. The elevated areas then become small pockets of pristine forest. Residents have adjusted well to these conditions and adapt their means of transport to the vagaries of nature.

FAKTEN

PARTNERSHIP WITH	Sumar Ltda. since 2014
OWNER	Family Vacaflores
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES OR FARMERS	Around 800 indigenous families (Nativos amazonicas of the Arawak tribe)
TYPO OF	Sumar Ltda. acts as the local coordinator and purchases the wild cacao, furthermore it also makes its own chocolate. The ´Cacaotales´(cacao islands) are in the public domain and belong to the TCO (Terra comunitaria de origen) according to Bolivian law. Therefore, they belong to the collective and not to individuals or companies.
SIZE IN HA	Since these are not cultivated areas, this cannot be quantified. There are around 100 to 120 accessible cacaotales
PRODUCTIONS VOLUME	According to estimates, about 500 tons of cacao is grown in the Beni department. None the less, only about 100 tons are accessible and furthermore, approximately 60% of this fall's victim to the whims of nature and the local fauna. Therefore only about 40 tons in total is harvested
EXPORT VOLUME TO FELCHLIN	Est. 30 tons depending on the harvest. The remaining 10 tons are being processed into chocolate by Sumar Ltda on site.
HOMEPAGE	https://www.chocolatebaure.com
COOPERATION SINCE	2014
CACAO VARIETY	Wild Beniano / Beniano Silvestre

FELCHLIN IN BOLIVIA

OUR PARTNER AND DIRECT COOPERATION ON SITE

Max Felchlin AG has been sourcing wild cacao from Bolivia since 2005. And from Sumar Ltda., owned by the Vacaflores family, since 2014. This collaboration is extremely successful and the quantities purchased have steadily increased in recent years. On site, Sumar Ltda.'s buyers oversee the procurement of the cacao beans and check the quality. Cacao is part of the daily food component for the local population and over generations knowledge of the fermentation and drying process have been passed on.

Sumar Ltda. further helps with its industrial know-how and also with careful consideration for the local conditions helps to gently optimise the processes even further.

Globally unique „wild cacao" is a niche product and is often associated with Felchlin under this name. As the wild cacao beans are very small, a loss of over 35% occurs while they are being processing in the Ibach factory, which is considerably higher than with conventional beans. In light of this, a great deal of effort which is definitely worth it and does a great deal of good.

BOLIVIAN COUVERTURE AWARDED ENVIRONMENTAL LABEL

Thanks in part to Felchlin's involvement, these vast, natural areas are still in their original condition and have not fallen victim to deforestation and livestock farming. As a result of this side-effect, «GEO protects the rain forest» awarded Felchlin Wild Cacao from Bolivia its label in January. This is a German association that campaigns to preserve tropical and sub-tropical forests.

GEO SCHÜTZT DEN REGENWALD e.V.

https://www.geo.de/natur/regenwaldverein

INDIGENOUS GROUPS – GATHERERS OF WILD CACAO

Wild cacao is usually gathered by indigenous families of the community of Baure who regularly travel to the collection areas by foot, boat, or motorbike. They divide the work amongst themselves, harvesting, fermenting, and drying the wild cacao together directly in the rain forest. They return to Baure after about two weeks and sell the dried cacao.

Although Bolivia has invested in infrastructure in recent years, making it easier to travel to these remote cacao islands via the region's unmade roads, the journey is still extremely hazardous.

The wild cacao is generally harvested from the end of December to the end of March. Outside the harvest season, the cacao plants are left to nature. They are neither fertilised nor pruned and are therefore naturally organic. The increasing trade in wild cacao is having a positive impact on residents' quality of life. Very few young adults leave the region, as their traditional way of life is deeply entrenched and urban areas are some distance away.

TRANSPORTING THE CACAO

From Baure the wild Bolivian cacao is transported about 400 km over unpaved roads to Trinidad. During the rainy season, this first section of the journey is extremely difficult and laborious for people and machinery.

From Trinidad, it is another 500 km to Santa Cruz, from where it is transported a further 1,100 km by truck over the Andes to Arica (Chile). In the port of Arica, the beans are loaded onto ships for onward transport to Europe by sea.

PRODUCTS

COUVERTURES

CACAO FRUIT COUVERTURE, DARK CHOCOLATE COUVERTURE, RONDO

BOLIVIA 68% 60H, DARK CHOCOLATE COUVERTURE, RONDO

BOLIVIA 45% 60H AU LAIT DE TERROIR, MILK CHOCOLATE COUVERTURE, RONDO

CACAOMASS BOLIVIA, CACAO MASS (CACAO MASS BEANT TO BAR)