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Curious Planet // Cultural Coordinates

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A World of Chocolate

THE WORLD'S insatiable appetite for chocolate traces back to 1519, when Spanish conquistadors took their first sip of *cacahuatl*, the Aztecs' spiced, bitter cocoa-bean drink. Centuries later, Europeans—with the Irish in first place—still devour the most chocolate per person.

Cocoa trees now encircle the globe, growing within 20 degrees north and south of the equator. Cocoa-producing nations, except for Brazil, generally don't eat the finished sweets. Though West African nations grow 68 percent of all cocoa beans, they consume only 1 percent of chocolate products. Ivory Coast provides 61 percent of the beans that the United States imports.

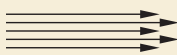
About 90 percent of all cocoa beans come from robust, high-yielding forastero trees, but many chocolate connoisseurs seek out the aromatic, complex flavor of criollo and trinitario beans. Like coffee roasters, chocolatiers carefully source beans to create distinctive blends. Italy's Amedei 9 bar, the 2009 winner of the Academy of Chocolate's prestigious Golden Bean Award, mixes beans from nine plantations—their locations remain a secret.

KEY

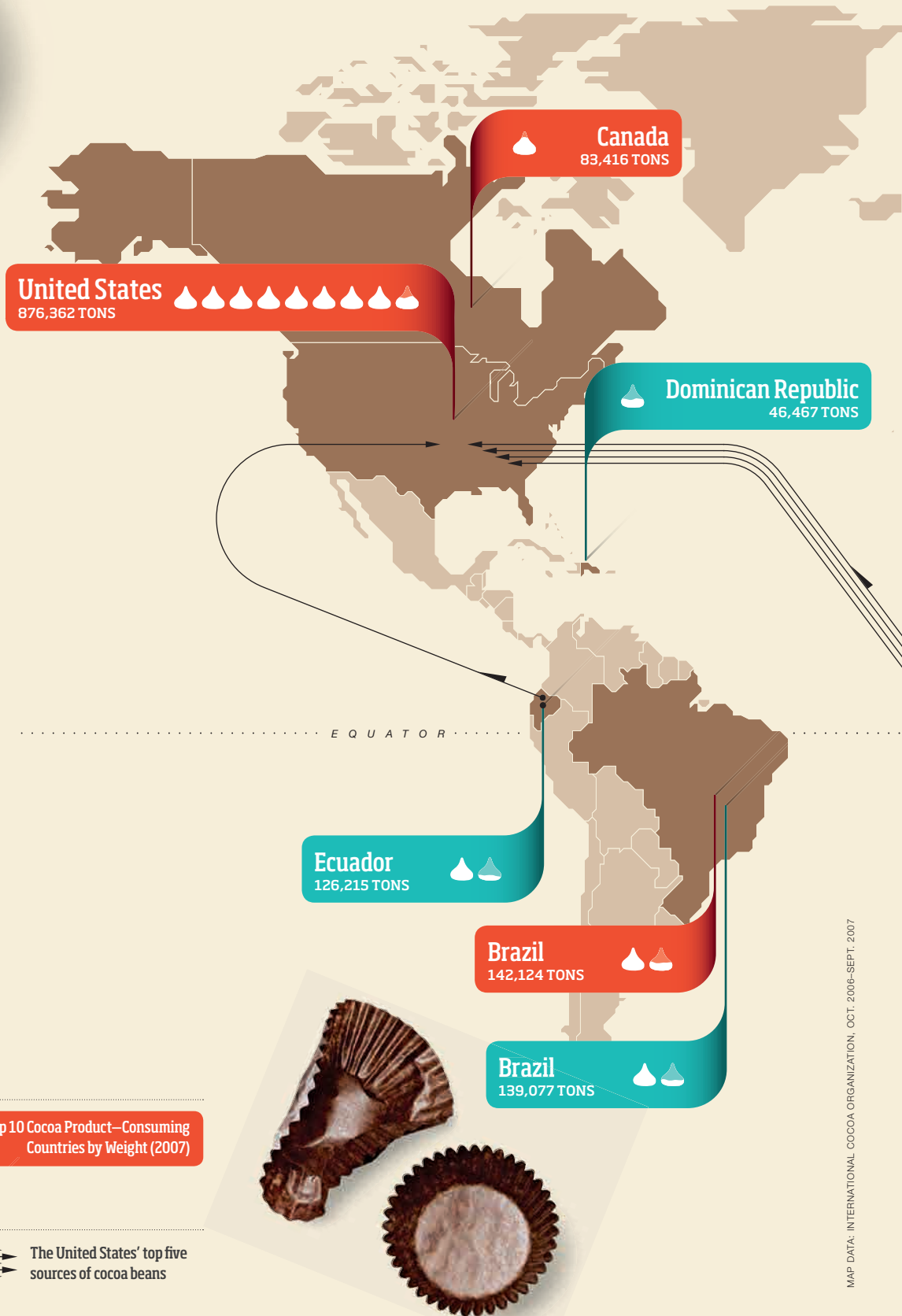
Top 10 Cocoa Bean—Producing Countries by Weight (2007)

Top 10 Cocoa Product—Consuming Countries by Weight (2007)

Equals 100,000 tons



The United States' top five sources of cocoa beans



MAP DATA: INTERNATIONAL COCOA ORGANIZATION, OCT. 2006—SEPT. 2007

FEEDING THE GLOBAL SWEET TOOTH: In the Philippines, try *tsokolate*, a frothy hot chocolate that combines cocoa, milk, sugar, and sometimes ground peanuts. The Dutch like to shake *hagelslag*, or chocolate sprinkles, on buttered toast. Turin, Italy, is famous for the hot drink *bicerin*—layers of cocoa, espresso, and cream, served in a glass.

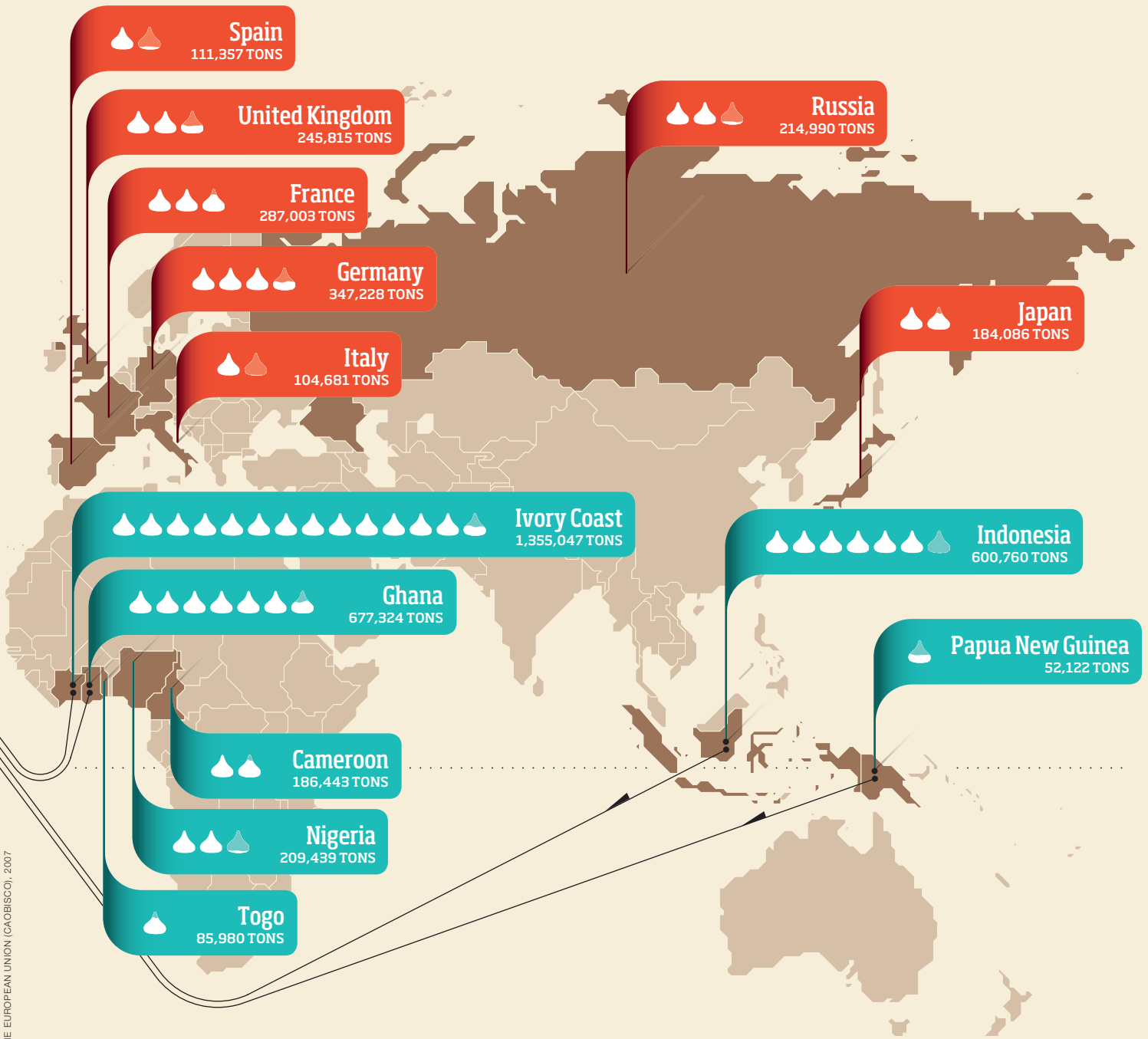


CHART DATA: INTERNATIONAL CONFECTIONERY ASSOCIATION AND ASSOCIATION OF CHOCOLATE, BISCUIT AND CONFECTIONERY INDUSTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (CAOBISCO), 2007

WHO EATS THE MOST CHOCOLATE?

Different countries crave different tastes in chocolate. Americans gobble up milk chocolate made with powdered milk, but Europeans prefer milk chocolate made with condensed milk, the way the Swiss first prepared it in 1876. Europeans complain that American chocolate tastes like sour milk. In fact, some U.S. manufacturers put chocolate through a process that, as a by-product, produces butyric acid, also found in rancid butter. Mmmm.

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|----------------|-----------|
| IRELAND | 26.1 LBS. |
| SWITZERLAND | 23.9 LBS. |
| UNITED KINGDOM | 22.3 LBS. |
| BELGIUM | 21.5 LBS. |
| NORWAY | 21.4 LBS. |
| GERMANY | 20.5 LBS. |
| SWEDEN | 18.3 LBS. |
| DENMARK | 16.3 LBS. |
| FINLAND | 15.9 LBS. |
| AUSTRIA | 15.3 LBS. |
| AUSTRALIA | 12.4 LBS. |
| UNITED STATES | 11.4 LBS. |

