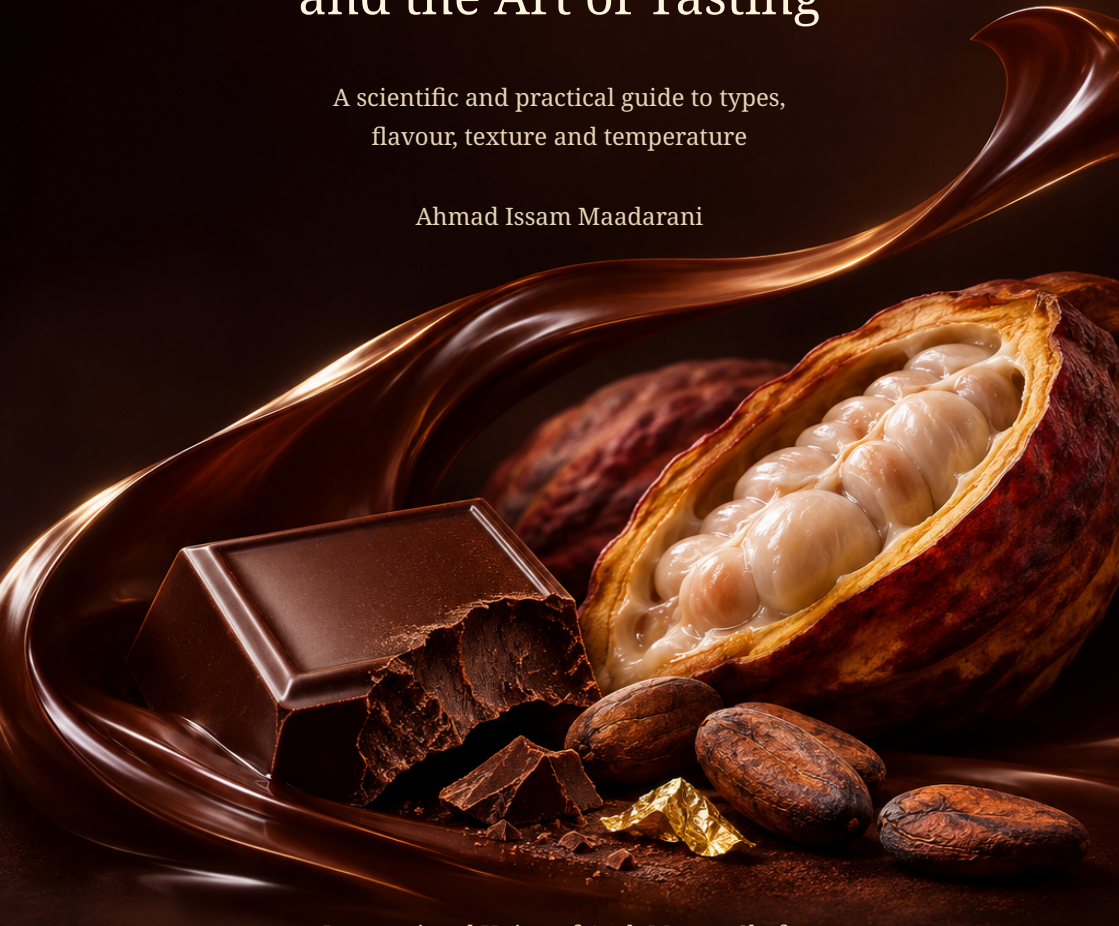
From cacao bean to sensory experience

CHOCOLATE

The Science of Flavour and the Art of Tasting

A scientific and practical guide to types, flavour, texture and temperature

Ahmad Issam Maadarani



International Union of Arab Master Chefs
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First English edition 2026 · Release 1.1

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The main text, exercises, cards and glossary were composed for this book, and references for scientific and historical facts are provided at the end. Manufacturers are named in examples to identify the source of product instructions; their inclusion does not constitute sponsorship or a commercial recommendation.

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This English edition preserves the Arabic source's scientific content and the author's foreword.

Foreword

Ahmad Issam Maadarani

I present this book in the belief that the value of tasting emerges when we can explain what we have perceived, distinguish observation from preference, and link judgement to clear evidence. Chocolate offers a rich example of this approach: a small piece brings together the story of a raw material, manufacturing choices, sensory interactions and practical details that change the outcome.

I wanted this work to be accessible to the reader, useful to chefs and pastry chefs, and suitable for consultation during practical exploration. We have therefore brought together explanations of types and ingredients, how to read a label, the steps of tasting, and melting and tempering temperatures, before moving on to applications, comparison and calculation. We have added the glossary and cards so that language becomes a working tool rather than a list of terms to memorise.

At the International Union of Arab Master Chefs, we value knowledge that translates into documented practice. Neither forceful wording nor a product's reputation is enough to form a professional judgement; we need a clear question, an appropriate procedure and a willingness to revise the outcome when new information emerges. This is the spirit we hope readers will carry from the book's pages into their kitchens and tasting sessions.

I invite readers to explore calmly: to describe before interpreting, to record before comparing, and to preserve the pleasure of discovery alongside precision of observation. Every good tasting card opens up a new question, and every better-framed question gives the experience deeper meaning.

I hope this book will help build a practical Arabic vocabulary for chocolate and its tasting, and serve as a useful step towards developing culinary practice and an informed palate.

Ahmad Issam Maadarani
Founder and General President
International Union of Arab Master Chefs
4 November 2026

Introduction

We can love chocolate before we know how to describe it. Yet moving from appreciation to understanding opens up a broader experience: we distinguish what we see, what we smell and what we feel in the mouth, recognise the effects of ingredients, temperature and processing, and then choose the product and its application with greater awareness.

This book offers a continuous journey from cocoa to the table. It begins with history and the raw material, distinguishes types, origin and recipe, then moves on to the senses, the tasting session, tempering and storage, before addressing kitchen applications, pairing, comparison and decision-making. It concludes with a trilingual glossary and practical cards for reference.

The reading progresses from knowledge to practice. Readers may begin with the opening chapters and try out their observations, then return to the tables and cards as needed. Professionals may choose the question that matters to them, while retaining one principle: describe the observation precisely and separate it from an explanation of its cause or a judgement of quality.

Products and their handling recommendations change, so the temperature tables relate to specific examples and do not replace the product's current technical data sheet. Experience also varies with the individual and the conditions; a single intensity score or impression is therefore no substitute for a complete report. The book aims to give readers clearer language and a working method that can be reviewed and improved.

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Chapter 1

From Pod to Bar

We trace cocoa's journey from the history of its use to the transformations that give chocolate its shape and flavour. Understanding begins with the raw material, before we seek to judge the piece.

Reading History Within a Piece of Chocolate

When we lift a piece of chocolate to our mouth, we encounter the result of a long series of transformations. It began as a seed inside a pod, then became a material to be processed, ground and mixed, before becoming a bar that could be carried, traded and divided. Reading history in this order prevents us from confusing human knowledge of cocoa with the emergence of the industrial form we buy today.

An archaeological study published in 2018 indicates ancient cocoa use at the Santa Ana–La Florida site in Ecuador around 5300 years ago. The evidence matters because it broadens our understanding of cocoa's American roots; it must not be turned into an imagined picture of a modern bar or a recipe identical to those we know today. [1]

When we consider cocoa drinks in Mesoamerican civilisations, we understand that the product had social and economic roles unlike its present-day use in a gift box or on a dessert menu. Its subsequent