

## **Chocolate Business in the Hospitality Industry**

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### **Abstract**

This article is the result of the review of literature on chocolate business, which converge in at least four sectors: tourism, agribusiness, gastronomic and cultural. The overall objective of the study was to determine the state of the art that keep these organizations in the context of the hospitality sector as a benchmark of marketing focused on tourism and gastronomy. The results highlight trends such organizations, in terms of differentiation and innovation with a view to generating competitive advantages that allow them a strong position in the sectors in which they participate.

With these prospects, growth in the chocolate market in Mexico, Latin America and the world, where communication of attributes and distinctive brands strategies supported by integrated marketing communications is privileged observed.

### **Chocolate, Tourism, Gastronomy, Marketing**

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## Introduction

Trends in international markets, particularly in the hospitality industry, show a growing interest in value-added foods, where the quality of raw materials and inputs is the main component. Significant growth has been recorded in this sector for a number of reasons, including: increased participation of services in world trade as a result of the implementation of the Organization's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) World Trade Organization (WTO) and the consequent participation of more and more businesses. In terms of the consumer there have been changes in their lifestyles; there is a significant interest in healthier, innovative foods where they have the opportunity to be part of the creation of the services they wish to enjoy.

In the case of the chocolate market, competition is becoming stronger and the companies involved in it need differentiated and effective marketing strategies. Chocolate in the hospitality industry is part of the processed foods sector, although it is also considered in the cultural sector.

The chocolate business can be a mixture of gastronomy and tourism, as evidenced by exhibitions and specialized international fairs such as the Chocolate Hall in Paris, Expo Milan and Eurochocolate in Perugia, Italy and the International Chocolate Awards in New York, In the United States of America (USA). In tourism, chocolate is considered a resource or attraction that can be enjoyed in museums, theme parks and cities emblematic of the product, as is the case of Hershey World, in the state of Pennsylvania of the United States; Or the National Chocolate Festival in Bariloche, Argentina. It is also a cultural component throughout history that is part of museums and scientific production where it is the center of various periodical and non-periodical publications.

From these perspectives, it is observed that the chocolate business is convergent in different sectors and its differentiated growth is undeniable.

## Literature review

It is imperative to take into account that the global economy moves through the marketing of products and services. The diversification of both products and markets is further generated by the influence of government policies, social changes, business trends, advances in information technology and globalization (Lovell, 2009, quoted by Camacho, 2015).

## Turism

Trends show that the tourism industry is perceived as a system of coordinated services that, in addition to possessing its strategic and tactical facilities, require the interpersonal relations of the visitor and his hosts in the destination-place (Ascanio, 2014). This link between the tourist and the recipient, is the one that supposes that the hospitality is the base of the tourism (Korstanje, 2013). At the same time, the hospitality industry includes various segments, such as food, lodging, travel and tourism, as well as the planning of conventions and meetings (Douglas and Bateson, 2002).

Tourism currently accounts for 10% of GDP, generates one out of every 11 jobs in the world, reflects US \$ 1.5 million in exports, in addition to contributing 30% of exports; In addition to contributing 30% of services exports worldwide (WTO, 2015).

In Mexico, tourism is a dynamic element in social and economic development, being the sector that generates more foreign exchange after the automotive industry and remittances (Madrid, 2015) and which generates nine million direct and indirect jobs (Castañeda, 2015) .

The tourist activity includes food, lodging, leisure, recreation and travel services, showing a growing trend in both consolidated and emerging destinations. In each and every one of them, the services of food, lodging, leisure and transportation are essential not only to attract the visitor, but to maintain it and even more generate significant experiences that will encourage you to return.

The business of chocolate in the tourism sector has as its main segment the so-called tourism of distinction, people of high cultural level who seek authentic and extraordinary experiences in their travels (Cohen, 2005, quoted by Korstanje, 2013 P.5). In this sector, the integral strategies are focused towards the stimulation of the creativity for the development of new tourist services with differentiated offers; Promotion of specialized product lines aimed at high purchasing power markets, establishment of a management statistics system for timely decision making, liquidation of obsolete services, redesign and replenishment of improved services (Ascanio, 2014).

### **Agroindustry**

Chocolate in the last years has had a special growth, particularly in Europe and the United States of America. New consumer markets prevail as in Asia Pacific. Consequently, there is a greater number of manufacturers, prestigious and emerging brands with a focus on product diversification and high value added, evident throughout the value chain; From the raw material with tendency towards the organic cocoa, greater concentration of the grain, new processes; To the presentations and contents of the products, with a high emphasis in the differentiation of the design and materials of packaging and packaging.

The food sector comprises from the chain or process that follows an agricultural, livestock, forestry or fishery product through the production, processing and exchange activities until reaching the final consumer (COMECYT-FUMEC, 2010 P. 5). One of the branches is the elaboration of chocolates, sweets and the like. Chocolate falls into what has been called the product of sophistication and is characterized by the lifestyle of consumers, who have demanding tastes.

They usually look for new experiences, new flavors, exotic or gourmet preparations. These consumers prefer unconventional environments, which may include the place where they eat or buy the product, the people who cook them, the use and combination of spices and food, as well as the way of preparation. The outlets for these products are very specialized restaurants, gourmet shops or specific regions.

These consumers are characterized by their high purchasing power and are willing to pay for the processing process, the origin of the ingredients and the environment in which it is consumed (COMECYT-FUMEC, 2010). Regarding packaged food, in 2008, the chocolate sub-sector accounted for 54.4% of the sector's total sales, with a total of 72,000 jobs. The offer consists of industrialized chocolate, with small percentages of cocoa butter or with chocolate flavor (Huerta, 2016).

In 2013, Mexico ranked eighth in processed food production. In 2014, the country had 157,000 establishments belonging to this industry and its Composite Accumulated Growth Rate (TCAC) was 8.7%, which had persisted in the period 2007-2014. (Actinver, 2015).

## Gastronomy

In the hospitality industry, trends in international markets show a growing interest in value-added foods, where the quality of raw materials and inputs is the main component. This fact indicates that there is a greater proclivity to size the gastronomy as a resource or, as the case may be, as a tourist attraction, which is appreciated by customers as a potential travel complement, provided that it means a motivation with added value (Flavián and Fandos, 2011).

In this sector the number of people who come to a specific destination only to know and taste their culinary offer is increasing, gastronomy is assumed as a distinctive sign of societies and their territories (Pulido, 2011). The term gastronomic tourism was first proposed to refer to the experience that tourists could experience in other countries through their typical food. Over time the concept has become generalized as the intention to travel for exploration and enjoyment of a special meal whose distinctive features are evident in a particular destination, this is achieved an unforgettable experience of an appetizing cuisine (Long, 2004; Wolf, 2002, quoted by Tsai & Hornig, 2012).

As a result, gastronomic businesses have become more professional and are constantly seeking to add value to their products and services, supported by the quality of service, the professionalism of their collaborators, creativity and innovation. In this sense, many destinations are considering the offer of tourist products that include gastronomy (Pulido, 2011).

In gastronomy, the city-country where the resources or attractions of beverages and differentiated foods are located is important, susceptible of being valued not only for the sensorial experience.

But also for the cultural and historical context that surrounds them and makes them more Flashy These immaterial and material elements of a destination give rise to new trends in tourism: culture, tradition, authenticity and experience. In this sense, the gastronomy allows the renovation of the tourism giving space to diverse professional sectors, that is to say, producers, markets, cooks, etc. (Falcon, 2014). With these perspectives, several authors have identified the level of preference that occupy the culinary attractions of the destinations that offer it. People who move to a place for gastronomic enjoyment; May prioritize local or ethnic cuisine, in position one, two, four or ninth (Ritchie, 1993, Jenkins, 1999, Juksel, 2001, Newton, 2005, quoted by Okumus, Okumus & Mckercher, 2007).

Gastronomic tourism can be conceived as an alternative of cultural tourism that allows the visitor to know about the habits and lifestyles of the residents of a destination through their gastronomic representations (Mascarenhas and Gándara, 2010). These scenarios undoubtedly generate an area of opportunity for the application of specialized and innovative marketing strategies.

The broad spectrum in which marketing is used has resulted in a different classification, which, in the case of gastronomic marketing, is presented with a clear link with the so-called marketing of experiences (Cabrera, 2013) and with the marketing of the permit, Which is used as part of the strategies of integrated communications and is to encourage customers to grant permission to a company to provide information about their products or services on an ongoing basis, which will allow them to be updated on And obtain data of value for them (Lovelock, 2009).

**Culture**

In terms of culture, UNESCO considers within its policies the rethinking of the link between tourism and cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and development. By linking tourism with culture, the services offered to visitors become more complex and required.

With these historical and gastronomic perspectives, chocolate has been adopted, particularly by consumers from European countries. Thus it is possible to observe that the culture of the chocolate has spread to diverse parts of the world. In tourism, the cultural component is an intangible, which, insofar as it is valued, becomes a differentiating element, sometimes unique and desired.

Therefore, it has in culture a fundamental raw material for the construction, diversification and sustainability of the products and services it offers. Some of these are considered as cultural-natural heritage and even as a non-renewable resource (Pardo, 2003; Forero, 2009, quoted by Camacho, 2016).

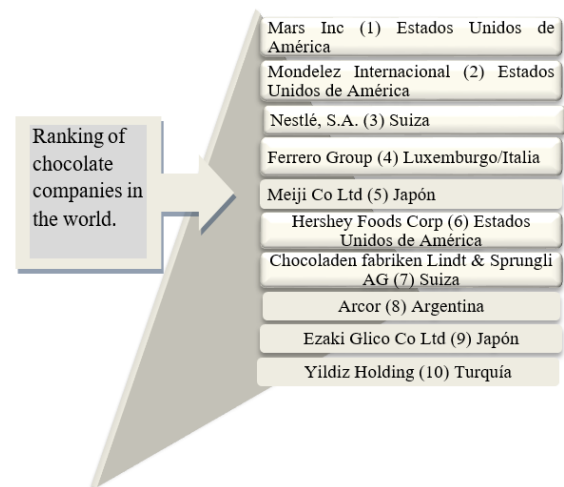
The chocolate had its origin and development in Mexico; Whose history refers to the product with different meanings: in Nahuatl xococ that means "sour", or, xocolia, referring to "sour" and atl "water", which is equivalent to saying fermented drink. In the Mayan language, the expression is chokol, "hot" and "a" concerning "water". However, the word, indistinctly has to do with a drink made with cacao. It was the Spaniards who began to call it chokolalt or xocolatl (Flores, 2012, McRae, 2007 and Lamoyi, 2002, quoted by Camacho, 2014).

**Results**

The main elements of analysis that have been identified in this work, allow us to glimpse that the chocolate business in its agroindustrial, gastronomic, tourist and cultural aspects require strategies that show the differentiation of the product, the image of the organization and the effective management of The demand (Kotler, 1997). It is also very important to take into account that culinary habits are influenced by factors such as social class, race, religion, age, education, health and social environment. The taste and behavior of consumption are formed within the society and social class to which it belongs, but it is also influenced by age, educational level and health care Guemes and Ramírez (2012).

**Agroindustrial**

Sales of the world's top ten chocolate companies in 2015 amounted to approximately 83.698 million dollars (Candy Industry, 2016 quoted by ICCO, 2016). In that year, there was an estimated growth of 3.8% compared to 2014, with the highest demand in Asia Pacific (ICCO, 2014, quoted by Camacho, 2016) (See Figure 1 and Table 1).



**Figure 1** Global position of the big chocolate corporations. Source: Elaboration with data from Candy Industry, January 2016, quoted by ICCO (2016)

Company	Sales (millions dollars)
MarsInc	18,400
Mondelez International	16,691
Nestlé S.A.	11,041
Ferrero Group	9,757
Meiji Co. Ltc	8,461
Hershey Co	7,422
Chocoladenfabriken Lindt & Sprungli AG	4,171
Arcor	3,000
EzakiGlico Co Ltd	2,611
Yildiz Holding	2,144

**Table 1** World chocolate sales in 2015. Source: (ICCO, 2016)

In Mexico, the chocolate market is valued at 22,000 million pesos, of which 54% of revenues correspond to domestic and foreign companies (Huerta, 2016). However, its dollar equivalence is 1,186,251.134 million, representing approximately .14% of the world market; That is to say, there is still a great potential to develop and take advantage of niches, which requires a starting point that implies a process of culturization and appropriation among the inhabitants of the country of origin of chocolate, followed by specialized marketing strategies to achieve positioning respective.

### Tourist-Cultural

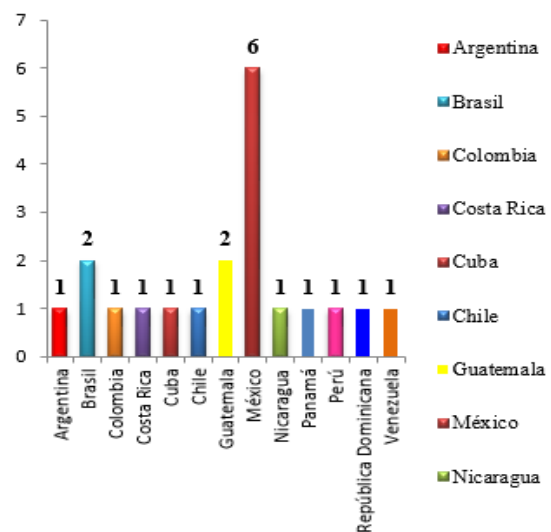
Chocolate in its foray into the cultural tourism sector, obviously converges with the gastronomic. This is the case of the Chocolate Museums, which according to UNESCO are organizations, which according to the prevailing nature of their exhibitions and collections are classified as specialized museums, whereas for the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Are Museums of Agriculture and Soil Products or Ecomuseos, which focus on the identity of a territory, based on the participation of its inhabitants.

Created for the purpose of the growth of well-being and community development (UNESCO, 1990 , ICOM, 2013, quoted by Camacho, 2016).

The chocolate businesses identified in cultural tourism fall into: museums, theme parks, city-brand, periodical (articles), non-periodical (books and films).

### Museums

In Latin America, 20 chocolate museums were identified in thirteen countries. Although this region shows low consumption of chocolate - in 2014 it averaged 800 grams per capita (América Economía, 2015); Small thematic museums of this product have been fostered, which are young and uncompetitive compared to museum organizations in Europe and the United States. However, these museums possess the comparative advantage of territoriality, since they are located where the cacao enjoys its natural habitat and the chocolate had its origin. The three countries with the largest number of organizations are: Mexico, Brazil and Guatemala (See graphic 1).



**Graphic 1** Museums by country in Latin America (Camacho, 2016)

These organizations have been promoted as part of the dynamics of the chocolate market, the first museums were located in 2003 in Argentina and Mexico. For 2007, Nestlé founded the Chocolate Museum in Toluca, Mexico. The Choco Museum in Granada, Nicaragua did the same in 2010; The Nestlé Chocolate Museum in Brazil in 2011 and the Chocolate Museum in the Federal District in 2014 (Tripadvisor s / f, Cruz, 2013, Archdaily, 2009, Iduarte, 2013, Callahan, 2013 and Starmedia, 2014).

### **Theme parks and city brand**

In North America, specifically in Pennsylvania, USA; Hershey World is one of the most positioned in the world, its success is attributed to the marketing strategies they use to capitalize on Milton Hershey's business history at the Hershey Story Museum. This tourist destination includes a tour of the factory, the creation of a chocolate bar by the visitor, who also live the experience of tasting chocolate; In addition to other activities like shopping, tasting the dishes of the restaurant, taking pictures of the studio. In the place where the theme park is located also the Flavors of Fall Dessert Festival takes place in the months of September and October. It features thirteen roller coasters and Water Park (Hershey's Chocolate World; VisitTheUSA.mx).

In South America, the San Carlos Bariloche Museum in Argentina is associated with the city-brand, where in the years 2014 and 2016 in the framework of the National Chocolate Festival held the first place in the manufacture of the largest chocolate bar in the country. World, with 150.5 meters in length (Nuevo Tiempo, 2016, quoted by Camacho, 2016).

### **Publications**

With regard to works on Chocolate Museums in Latin America, the articles were identified: "Nestlé Chocolate Museum in Toluca, Mexico" by Michel Rojking (2009) who emphasizes the sensorial, efectista and expansive architecture of the place; The one of Camacho (2016) on "Chocolate, Museums of Chocolate in Latin America: marketing and tourism", consisting of a market analysis and positioning of Latin American chocolate museums.

As for books, were located 151 titles that have as its main theme chocolate. Its authors are from Mexico, Brazil, United States of America, Germany, France and Italy. Several of these works are translated into several languages. The focus is culinary, novels, art, archeology, tourism and history. There are also directed children through stories and of course chocolate dictionary. In addition to the books, there are also films, where two of the best known in Mexico are: "Like Water for Chocolate" and "Strawberry and Chocolate", the first Mexican and the second Cuban.

### **Conclusions**

Bearing in mind the purpose of this article was to know the state of the art that keeps the chocolate business in the hospitality sector, with an emphasis on cultural tourism and gastronomy. The results highlight the trends of this type of organizations, their complementary products and services with a differentiated approach, conducive to innovation that allows the generation of competitive advantages, and in some cases as the theme parks have a solid positioning, while Museums, particularly Mexicans have comparative advantages, as the country where chocolate originated.

The big chocolate companies in the world maintain their position, especially the first nine. Without a doubt, they participate in a very competitive, competitive and innovative market. Its sales represent approximately 84,000 million dollars. In this context, Mexico participates with 0.14% of the world sales for an estimated 1.19 million dollars.

Theme parks, brand-city, museums, books, movies have in chocolate a consolidated business shed. Among the first ones can be mentioned to Hershey World, in the state of Pennsylvania of the USA; And the National Chocolate Festival in Bariloche, Argentina. With regard to museums, in Latin America there are 20 dedicated to chocolate, six of them located in Mexico.

Gastronomic tourism is on the rise and chocolate is one of the most appreciated products worldwide. In this sense, the festivals and specialized exhibitions have consolidated other attractive schemes where converge experts chocolatiers, producers, designers, entrepreneurs and in general the people involved with the product. Among the best known are the Chocolate Hall in Paris, Expo Milan and Eurochocolate in Perugia, Italy and the International Chocolate Awards in New York, in the United States of America. Other festivals in Mexico, take place in Tabasco, Puebla, Monterrey and Distrito Federal, all specialized in chocolate.

The chocolate business is essentially confined to the Processed Foods Sector; which encompasses, in addition to local companies, those of external competition. With these tendencies, it can be seen that in the chocolate business, the presentation of the product or the complementary services is a determining element, as well as the quality and differentiation, as well as the corporate image of the organizations, which are based on the identity And brand promise.

In general, chocolate marketing or associated services can be summarized in three key industries (See Table 2).

Products	Industry	Chocolate Business
Food and beverage provision services	Processed food	
	Cultural tourism	Commercial chocolate (national and international brands)
Cultural Services	Agroindustry	Museums of chocolate

**Table 2** Industries involved in the chocolate business. Source: Own adaptation based on UNWTO (s / f)

Undoubtedly the chocolate business will continue its diversification and growth, the great challenge in Latin America and Mexico is the culturization of the product and the potential increase in consumption per capita. In the case of Latin America, in 2014 was 800 grams (America Economy, 2015) and in Mexico until 2015 remained at 750 grams (Huerta, 2016).

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