

CACAO Growing Conditions

The cacao tree (*Theobroma Cacao*) is grown in the tropics in a band between 10 to 20 degrees north and south of the equator, sometimes called the "Cocoa Belt". The tree is often grown in the shades of other trees. It can be as tall as 40 feet (12 meters), and has fruits (pods) which are more than on foot (30 cm) long. The fruits may be brownish-yellow to purple, and contain 20-40 seeds or cacao beans in a pink, sweet-sour pulp.

The cacao tree is cultivated in [many countries](#), but today the leading suppliers are Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil, Cameroon, Ecuador, Dominican Republic and Papua New Guinea. Other well-known manufacturing countries are Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, some Caribbean islands like [Grenada](#) and [Cuba](#), and some Pacific islands like [Samoa](#).

SUGAR Growing Conditions

Table sugar (sucrose) comes from plant sources. Two important sugar crops predominate: [sugarcane](#) (*Saccharum spp.*) and [sugar beets](#) (*Beta vulgaris*), in which sugar can account for 12% to 20% of the plant's dry weight.

Most cane-sugar comes from countries with warm climates, such as [Brazil](#), [India](#), [China](#), [Thailand](#), [Mexico](#) and [Australia](#), the top sugar-producing countries in the world.

Beet-sugar comes from regions with cooler climates: northwest and eastern Europe, northern Japan, plus some areas in the United States (including California). In the northern hemisphere, the beet-growing season ends with the start of harvesting around September. Harvesting and processing continues until March in some cases. The availability of processing-plant capacity, and the weather both influence the duration of harvesting and processing - the industry can lay up harvested beet until processed, but frost-damaged beet becomes effectively unprocessable.