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Bienvenido a Zorzal Cacao's Chocolate Maker Week!

Hi all! We are psyched to welcome you to the Dominican Republic. Expect to enjoy the best that the Dominican Republic has to offer – beaches, mountains, nature, and of course, cacao, lots of cacao. We'll start our journey in San Francisco de Macoris, a bustling, prosperous city surrounded by cacao and rice fields in the heart of the Valle del Cibao. From there we will visit well known centralized fermentaries before visiting Reserva Zorzal and heading to Cabarete, the adventure-sports capital of the country and close to the best beaches in the Caribbean. The agenda is included here and other important details about the trip.

Plane ticket details:

There are 2 options to fly in and out of the Dominican Republic: #1) Fly into Santiago (STI) (May 31st) and leave from Santiago (STI) (June 6th or June 7th); or #2) Fly into Santiago (STI) May 31st and leave from Puerto Plata (POP) (June 6th or June 7th). Puerto Plata is the easiest to leave from, because we'll be in Cabarete at the end of the trip and the airport is only 30 minutes away. Cabarete is about 1.5 hours from Santiago. Airport transportation cost to both airports is covered by the trip fee.

Cost & Continued Stay

Your payment for the trip is all inclusive for a rate of \$950, that you can pay online here (insert link). This trip rate includes lodging, food, transportation, and entry fees to events. The only additional expenses you are responsible for are cocktails/beers, sport activities in Cabarete, and gifts you may want to purchase while there.

Thank you,

Charles Kerchner, PhD

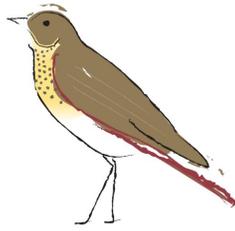
Manager, Zorzal Cacao

Russell Brott

Marketing Director, Zorzal Cacao

Thank you again for joining us!

Chuck and Russell



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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Chuck Kerchner: 1 802-999-6986

Russell Brott: 1 202-631-1330

Jochy (Driver): 1 809-758-3583

Jaimie Moreno (Zorzal partner - speak English): 1 809-754-5153

Ramon Belen (Administrator): 1 829-706-2890

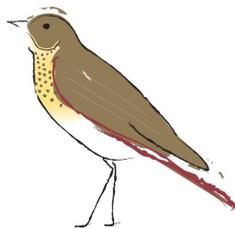
Emergency: 911

Police de Sosua: 1 809-571-2338

U.S. Embassy: 1 809-567-7775

Cabarete Hospital Ambulance: 1 809-571-4696/1 809-571-4403

Bournegal Hospital in Puerto Plata: 1 809-586-2342



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Itinerary

Here is the itinerary for the trip, subject to change based on weather or other constraints.

Day 1 Sunday (May 31st) –ARRIVAL

Fly into Santiago, travel to San Francisco de Macoris to settle into your room, meet the rest of the group, and receive an orientation for the week.

Accommodations: San Francisco de Macoris

Attire: Casual

Day 2 Monday (June 1st) – CENTRALIZED FERMENTARIES: OKO CARIBE Y ZORZAL'S FACILITY

We will visit two fermenting and drying centers. We'll head to Zorzal's new fermentorium in Los Arroyos of San Francisco de Macoris. In the afternoon, we'll visit OKO Caribe, a medium scale fermenting and drying facility and one of the main suppliers of Dominican specialty cacao to craft chocolate makers.

Accommodations: San Francisco de Macoris

Morning attire: Long pants, short or long sleeve shirt and comfortable shoes. Bring: water, sunscreen and bug spray. Evening attire: Casual - pants, button down shirt, dress - dance attire.

Days 3 Tuesday (June 2nd) – VISIT CACAO FARMER & RESERVA ZORZAL DAY 1

Visit cacao farmer who produces for our Zorzal Comunitario line on the way to Reserva Zorzal. Upon arrival at Reserva Zorzal, learn about the protected area policy, tour the farm, and swim in the river!

Accommodations: Reserve Zorzal

Attire to wear/pack: Long pants, 2 long shirts and shoes/boots for hiking (we will have gum boots for you as well!). Bring bathing suit for river, sweatshirt or warm long shirt for night time, windbreaker pants or sweatpants for nighttime, flashlight, water bottle. If they have tevas or sandals for walking in the river, bring them!

Day 4 Wednesday (June 3rd) – RESERVA ZORZAL DAY 2

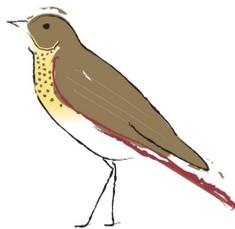
We'll spend the first part of our day harvesting cacao and continue to explore and learn about Reserve Zorzal.

Accommodations: Reserva Zorzal

Day 5 Thursday (June 4th) – Head to Cabarete and cacao cooperative

Tour cacao cooperative, explore coastal ecology, and have dinner on the beach!

After two days and two nights at Reseva Zorzal in the mountains, we'll end the trip in Cabarete on the north coast. Enjoy the beach, kite surf, cliff jump off waterfalls, or just relax in the sun. The calm waters, combined with breezy conditions make it ideal for wind surfing and kite surfing. Encuentro Beach is known for its surf breaks. We can also visit one the largest cacao cooperatives, CONOCADO, about 45 minutes from Cabarete (TBD, based on interest of the group).



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Day 6 - Friday (June 5th) – Free day

For those who want to stay an extra day, we were able to extend the hotel reservations one night in Cabarete. This is a day to do whatever you'd like to do: go kite surfing, surfing, caving or kayaking! Or just relax and read a book?

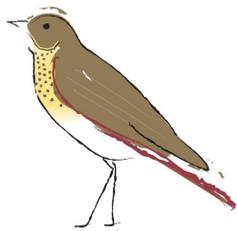
Accommodations: Cabarete

Attire: Likely will involve a swimsuit... clothing for whatever activity you choose to do

Day 7 – Saturday (June 6th) – Departure

On the last day we'll depart from the Dominican Republic with an understanding of cacao production, post harvest handling, variables that affect flavor development and so much more! And oh yeah, you might just come back a little tanner.

Note: If you have the time, we highly suggest you stay a few extra few days to take advantage of the beautiful beaches and adventure activities in Cabarete!



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Zorzal Chocolate Week: Cacao Background

Zorzal Cacao

Zorzal Cacao was founded in 2013 with a mission to provide fine flavored cacao to craft chocolate makers worldwide while supporting sustainable conservation finance mechanisms. Zorzal cacao has two primary types of bean brands. We grow, harvest, ferment, and dry specialty clones from Reserva Zorzal, which is called “Zorzal Estate” beans. We also purchase wet beans from landowners in the Reserve’s eco-region and ferment, dry, and export to chocolate makers, which is called “Zorzal Comunitario”. The primary conservation mechanisms we target is carbon offsets through the Plan Vivo standard that finance reforestation efforts and promotion of Private Reserves. All our conservation efforts are supported through cacao sales.

Reserva Zorzal

Reserva Zorzal is a 1,019 acre bird privately owned sanctuary for the Bicknell’s Thrush, a rare migratory bird that travels between the northeastern U.S. and the Dominican Republic every year. The sanctuary serves as a protected haven where Bicknell’s Thrush can safely winter.

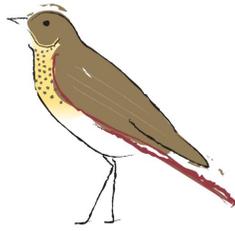
Seventy percent of the land is sanctioned to be “forever wild,” and about thirty percent is set aside for growing cacao that is eventually harvested, fermented, dried, and sold to small chocolate makers in the northern hemisphere. Born from Dr. Kerchner’s research exploring alternative funding models for conservation, Reserva Zorzal serves to prove that commerce and conservation can in fact intersect, and the private sector has a unique opportunity to participate in saving the planet and its disappearing species. In the past, government funding has only provided about 25% of the funds needed to finance protected areas in Latin America, and as the Dominican Republic’s first private bird reserve, Reserva Zorzal is a pioneer.

Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic was the 10th largest producer of cacao in 2013 with 68,021 tonnes of beans! That is a lot of cacao and most of it is not up to the same quality standards used in fine flavor cacao. The DR is one of the top producers of Fairtrade Cacao in the world (it varies by year if they are the top or one of the top).

Cacao Trees

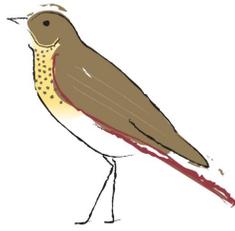
Grow up to 40 feet but typically pruned to 10 feet. Cocoa pods grow on the trunk and large branches of the tree. Their flowers are tiny and only about 1-5% will ever turn into a pod. Pods take approximately 6 months to grow from a flower. They grow in the band between 20 degrees North and 20 degrees South of the equator. Cacao pods holds 35-55 cacao seeds that grow almost like corn on the cob along a chord called the placenta. The seeds are surrounded by a fruit known as mucilage. Cocoa pods do not fall of trees on their own, they must be removed by man or animal.



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Cacao Harvesting and Farm Processing

Ripe cacao pods are harvested. Pods are broken open and cacao beans & surrounding mucilage are pulled out and separated from the pod, the resulting beans are considered “wet beans”. Buckets of wet beans are collected and fermented, then dried. After beans are dry, they are sorted to discard any undesirable things from the beans (bugs, rocks, placenta, etc). Beans are then placed in a bag for shipping and stored until enough quantity exists to fill a container.



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Cacao Vocabulary

Cacao / Cocoa: used mostly interchangeably (exception is spanish language cacao refers to any unsweetened element of cacao).

Theobroma Cacao: the species of the tree that grows cacao (also known as food of the gods)

Cocoa Pod / Pod: a large, colorful football shaped fruit that has a thick outside similar to a squash that protects the cacao fruit and seeds.

Cacao Seed / Cocoa Bean / Cacao: Seeds of the theobroma cacao tree

Mucilage / Pulp / Baba: The white fruit that surrounds the cacao seeds

Placenta: the long strand running inside the cocoa pod to which cocoa seeds are connected. Sometimes eaten for its high nutritional content

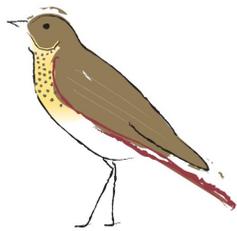
Midge: Any number of small insects that pollinate the cacao tree

Theobroma Bicolor / Balam / Jaguar Fruit: Another species of theobroma, the trees tend to grow taller, the pods are similar to theobroma cacao but look “veiny”, the beans are pure white, and the pulp is orange.

Fermentation: The fruit of the cacao pod when exposed to air begins to ferment. This process creates flavor pre-cursors that create the flavor we associate with cacao.

Primary-fermentation: Initially, yeast eats the sugars from the fruit creating heat + alcohol

Secondary-fermentation: When exposed to air, bacteria begin to break down the alcohol created and in turn create acetic acid.



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Fermentation Box: A wooden box made of hardwoods to house the beans/mucilage during the fermentation process. Holes on the bottom of the box allow byproducts of the fermentation process to run off.

3-Tier Fermentation Boxes: An offset stack of 3 fermentation boxes (almost like half of a pyramid) in which beans are placed in the top tier initially then moved to the second lower tier then moved to the third tier which is even lower than the second. This helps fermenters turn the beans more easily as well as keep track of how long beans have been fermenting.

Drying Deck: A large deck area designed to dry cocoa beans after fermentation.

Sorting: process of sorting through the beans and removing rocks, twigs, insects, defects

Cut Test: Cutting open a bean to learn more about it (throughout the process it helps determine when the beans are ready). Often done with a pocket knife and cut lengthwise.

Raw Cacao: Industry term for fermented, dried cocoa beans. Often confused. It does not relate to the raw food movement since typical fermentation temperatures are in excess of 112 or 118 degrees.

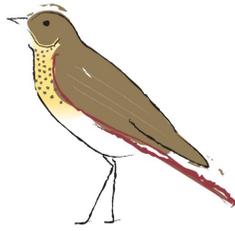
Husk: The outermost protective layer of a cacao bean. Fibrous and tough, this layer protects the beans from bacterias and molds. Not used to make chocolate (is either discarded or used as mulch).

Nib: The nutrients of the cacao bean. If allowed to grow this would provide the nutrients to the young plant until it can grow enough leaves to capture energy from the sun.

Radical: A small tough part of dried beans that looks like a tiny nail. This would become the taproot if allowed to grow.

Graft: A small branch of a mother tree that is inserted onto an established seedling or mature tree. It allows clones of a tree to used to create similar flavors across a farms yield.

Roast: Cocoa beans can be roasted in a variety of ways, but always the goal is to draw out the flavor precursors created during fermentation.



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Crack: Roasted cacao beans are cracked to help remove the husk

Winnow: Process of using air (wind) to remove the lighter weight husk from the heavier nibs.

Refine: Reducing the particle size of nibs (and other ingredients). The more refined the particle size, the smoother the chocolate tastes.

Metate: A stone tool traditionally used to grind food like corn in central american countries. Similar to a mortar & pestle but designed for larger quantities.

Wet Cacao / Wet Beans: Cacao beans that have been separated from the pod and are surrounded by “wet” mucilage. They have not yet been fermented or dried.

Sanchez: One of two types of beans produced in the DR. They are cheaper and not well fermented (if fermented at all)

Hispaniola: One of two types of beans produced in the DR. More expensive and better fermented beans.