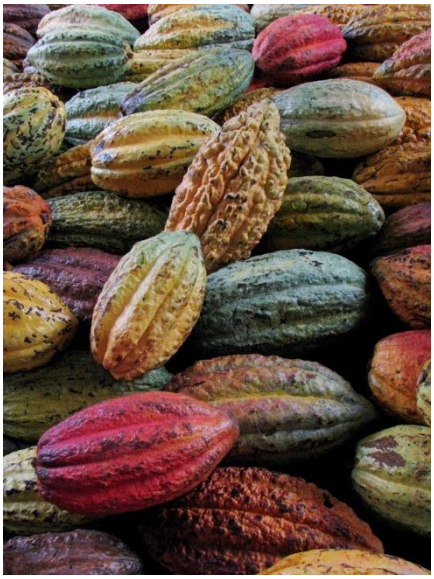
TAN BUN SKRATI

Newsletter May 2019

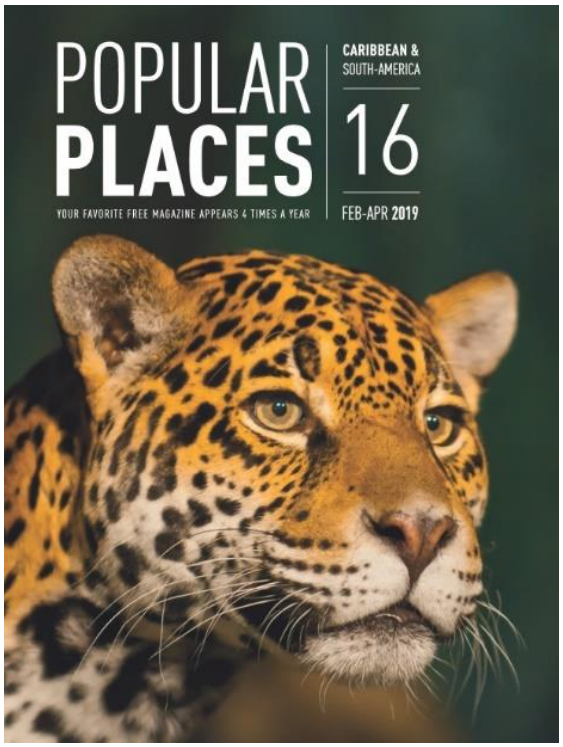

photos: Christine Samson

Start of the long rainy season, peak of harvesting season

The start of the long rainy season sees the main harvest of cacao in Suriname peaking. Over the next few months we'll be in the field a lot for harvesting. The coincidence of harvest and rainy season has always been *the* challenge in the post-harvesting (fermenting and drying) of cacao in Suriname. The high humidity especially complicates the drying. Back in the days, to speed up the extraction of moisture the beans would upon completion of the fermentation be mixed together with ash. Machine drying using hot air was also common practice. But to obtain good flavours, the beans shouldn't dry too fast. That is why we do our drying indoors, using dehumidifiers and fans. This way we can ensure, also in rainy seasons, that the beans lose their moisture slowly and gradually.

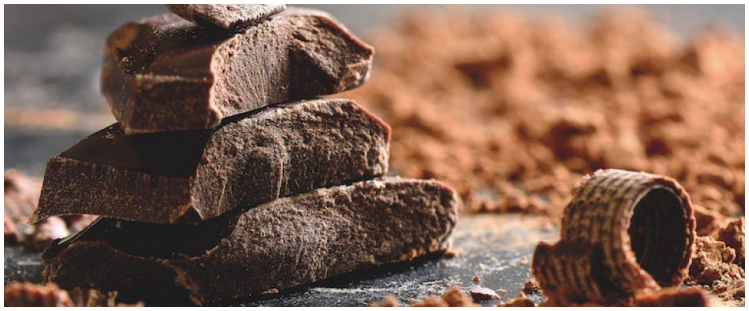
Tan Bun Skrati considered 'leading Caribbean chocolate brand'

Over the past months we have been featured in several media outlets: for his culinary vlog comedian Howard Komproe tasted our 72% and 100% chocolate; in the Popular Places magazine an article appeared on the history of Surinamese cacao and for Peter Schoenakers' ChocoladebloG we did and interview for the 'Chocopraat' section (i.e. Choco Talk). On the website of Caribbean and Co Tan Bun Skrati was even reckoned as one of seven 'leading Caribbean chocolate brands'! Click on the pictures below for links to the articles and video.









From chocolate to s'krati

While searching for stories that can shed a light on the origins of skrati - 'who made it first and where? – on the internet we stumbled upon a 2003 publication of dr. Norval Smith: *'Evidence for recursive syllable structures in Aluku and Sranan'.* In it he wrote that the word 'skrati' is of Portuguese origin. This surprised us, because for a long time we had been thinking that 'skrati' was either derived from English 'to scratch' or a contraction of 'sukru ati' (literally 'sugar heart').

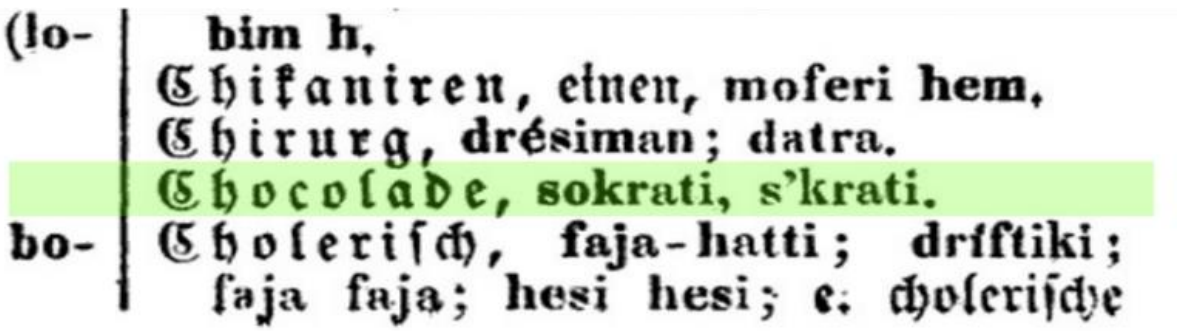
Because no further explanation for this Portuguese origin was given in this article we decided to write the author, who is affiliated as a linguist to the Amsterdam University (UvA) and ask for further details. Mr. Smith provided these extensively in his reply.

As it turns out, skrati is derived from Portuguese 'chocolate', that indeed is written the same way as it is in English, but has a different pronunciation. English stresses the first syllable: 'cho'; Portuguese stresses the third: 'la'.

{Listen to the Portuguese pronunciation by clicking the speaker-icon on the Google translate page}

In Sranantongo in general, the stressed syllable in loan words from Dutch, English and Portuguese is maintained, while pretonic unstressed vowels have a tendency to disappear if pronounceable. Furthermore, the letter 'l' is regularly replaced with the letter 'r'.

This way Portuguese 'chocolate' via 'sokoláti' changed to 'sokrati' to later become the current 'skrati'. This changing course is well illustrated in Wullschlägels German – Sranan dictionary from 1856:



(lo- | bim h.
Chikanixen, einen, moferi hem.
Chirurg, drésiman; datra.
Chocolade, sokrati, s'krati.
bo- | Cholerisch, faja-hatti; drifftiki;
faja faja; hesi hesi; c. choleriſche

Source: H.R. Wullschlägel, Deutsch – Negerenglisches Wörterbuch, 1856

A Portuguese origin of the word 'skrati' strengthens the assumptions that skrati-making was introduced in Suriname by Jews who during the Inquisition of the mid-seventeenth century had been expelled from Pernambuco (present-day Brazil). There they would have acquainted themselves with the technique learning from indigenous people. We hope to be able to write more on that topic in a later newsletter.

Thousandth participant cacao workshop / Back in stock @ The Chocolate Shop & Smellslikechocolate
Early 2014 we started organizing the tree-to-bar cacao workshops. Many have already been introduced to Surinamese cacao: tourists, professionals, holidaymakers, trainees, circles of friends, company picnics, skrati kids and families. We expect to be welcoming the thousandth participant shortly. Perhaps you could be that guest? If so, you will find out what's in the pergamin paper bags and we'll have a nice surprise waiting for you!

And for our readers in the Netherlands: The Chocolate Shop, *the* specialty chocolate store for The Hague and miles around and the picturesque Smellslikechocolate in Zaandijk have new batches of our bars in stock.





photos: Tan Bun Skrati & The Chocolate Shop

Shaping the future

Twenty talented and driven youngsters visited Tan Bun Skrati as part of the Future Leaders and Entrepreneurs Program 2018. This program is organized annually by the Global Shapers Paramaribo. Goal of the program is to help create responsible leaders and entrepreneurs, inter alia by having Surinamese youth make acquaintance with business activity in a number of working fields.

In a busy morning session we told about the importance of local production and the unexpected chances that small scale production has to offer. After a crash course in cacao processing the participants as a team ground cacao for skrati muffins with mortars and pestles and each of them planted seeds to grow into new trees.

The vlog that Richano Sodipo made about the visit gives a good impression of this enervating day. The Tan Bun Skrati feature starts at 5:38 minutes, right after the visit to the Moengo Arts Festival.



photo: Richano Sodipo

FCCI Map of fine cacao and chocolate

For those who are travelling and are wondering where to find specialty chocolate stores, where craft chocolate makers are based or where in the country cacao growers are working, there is a tool that comes in handy: the FCCI map of fine cacao and chocolate. On this map, that is updated ad maintained by the Fine Cacao and Chocolate Institute (FCCI), premium cacao and chocolate are center stage. Off course, we can be found on it too. And if there is something or someone who you think is missing on the map, you can just send the FCCI an email and they will have it included.



Recipe: skrati-eksi kuku by Diana Dubois

Inspired by a visit to Tan Bun Skrati and with one of the 100% chocolate bars in the pocket Diana Dubois – from Het kookboek van Dubois – Surinaamse recepten en culinaire geschiedenis – made the Arni koekoe: an egg chocolate cake.

Here is what you need for it: 7 eggs, 6 tablespoons brown caster sugar, 6 tablespoons sunflower oil, 5 tablespoons flour + 1 extra for the baking tray, 5 tablespoons white (caster-) sugar, 2 tablespoons finely grated skrati or other cacao powder, 1 tablespoon almond flour, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon vanilla-essence.

You can further read how to make it here

Do you have a recipe using our chocolate too? Let us know. We'd love to hear it!



photo: Diana Dubois

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, just respond to the email with a "NO" and we'll stop the dispatch.

A complete and up-to-date summary of our points of sale can be found here. Before going to the store, we advise to first inquire about availability of stock.

Every Thursday and Friday we open our workshop to host workshops.

Via the facebook page you can follow us closely. Like us to stay in the loop!

TAN BUN SKRATI

Tan Bun Skrati N.V. - *tree to bar cacao from Suriname*

+597 458 706 / whatsapp +597 8642609

tanbunskrati@gmail.com

info@tanbun.org

www.tanbun.org

www.facebook.com/TanBunSkrati

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