

Chuncho Urusayhua

Preserving the ancient Chuncho cacaos in the
Urubamba Valley, Peru



ORIGINAL BEANS

TASTE THE EARTH'S RAREST PLACES AND PRESERVE THEM



Chuncho Urusayhua

How it started

The very moment Jan Schubert tasted the first of the 10 aromas and 24 flavours of the mythic Chuncho he knew that this was an original bean. Since that moment in 2012, Original Beans' Latin America Bean Team leader has worked with local cacao growers, leading cacao scientists, stakeholders and supply chain partners in the Urubamba Valley to bring us the true Chuncho. Like the Ecuadorian Arriba, the Peruvian Chuncho in its authentic, pure form is hard to find and even harder to source. So when we finally, in 2015, had selected our cacao growers and perfected the fermentation protocol for the first 4 tons of beans, we were so deeply captivated by their wealth of flavours that we decided to use them for a 100% bar. Our cacao project and footprint in the Urubamba Valley keeps growing and we are happy to be able to offer the true Chunchos to our fellow chocolate makers.

The bean: the original Chunchos

Cocooned by their Andean terroir and preserved due to the proud and vivid cacao tradition of local families, the heirloom Chuncho cacaos have survived the passing of times in the Urubamba Valley. The old and sturdy Chuncho trees, some of which are 200 years old, grow at an altitude of 1.200m, which is highly unusual for cacao. The local families are exceptionally proud of their Chuncho heritage and many families carefully harvest beans from their oldest trees to make their own hot chocolate—roasted over the fire with cinnamon or orange peels, grinded in corn grinders and submerged in milk and sugar. Cacao genetic scientists have recently found that the old Chunchos are some of the genetically and aromatically richest cacaos in the world. The same experts believe that the Matsigenka Indians, back in pre-Inca times, selected and planted their favorite Chunchos based on the flavours and aromas of the pulp, which they used for juice. The Matsigenka still value their cacao juice highly and we owe the rich and diverse flavours of today's Chunchos to these cacao-loving people—flavours that we



intend to cherish and preserve.

Many cacaos from Peru wrongly carry the label “Chuncho”, but most are foreign modern hybrids that have been spread throughout the region, where they have replaced the rich diversity of native cacaos. However, we are just in time to preserve the true Chunchos and, at Original Beans, we only source from selected farmers with old Chuncho trees—a selection of which we also help propagate and raise in nurseries and plant in cacao-agroforestry systems on the Andean slopes.

The origin: Urubamba Valley, Peru

Apu Urusayhua. Mother of stone, home of the mighty Andean Condor. Local mythology describes it as a sacred mountain and Apu is also the local name given to the mountain spirits that guard the land and connect the people to the highest realm. In these heights lies Machu Picchu, an astonishing citadel built by the ancient Incas. Beneath the heights, the spume and the strong winds of the Apu Urusayhua, lies the lush Urubamba Valley, where local smallholders grow their ancient Chuncho.

Bean profile

Name: Chuncho Urusayhua

Origin: Urubamba Valley, known as the Sacred Valley of the Inca, Cusco region, Peru

Varietal: Carefully selected cacao from old-grown Chuncho cacao trees, some of which are 200 years old. The Chunchos have been identified to be some of the genetically and aromatically richest cacaos in the world

Tasting notes: Dried flowers, cut grass, dried fruit, and honey.

Harvest: January

Rarity: Total harvest volumes below 40Mt annually

Terroir: Andean cacao forest. Rocky. Cliffs. Grown with citrus and timber. Near water streams and creeks flowing from the mountain into the valley. 1200 meters above sea level.

Fermentation and drying: The beans are fermented for 2–4 days in wooden boxes, adjusted to climatic conditions by experienced technicians. Focus is on attaining the highest quality without reaching high fermentation levels that generate bitterness. When little fermented, the Chuncho beans are neither bitter or astringent nor acid, but they may become so when fermented for more than four days. Wet beans are bought

from selected Chuncho farmers, whereafter fermentation, drying, quality control and flavor analysis takes place at a centrally located post-harvest center.

Technical aspects

Fermentation level: > 70%

Moisture: <7%

Bean size: 70–90g / 100 beans

Quality: Quality is evaluated and flavours are validated for all shipments to assure that they comply with Original Beans standards.

Certifications: Organic

Traceability: Full

Cacao and community project

Original Beans works together with local partners to identify vigorous and flavorful Chuncho cacaos, of which we will raise seedlings that will be planted in agroforestry systems to protect the Andean slopes and watersheds. Our conservation journey has also led us to one of the Incas sacred animals that requires immediate support to survive in the wild: the mighty Andean condor. This year, we will support the release of a family of these airborne giants in

the heights of Apu Urusayhua.

What the project does

- Selection, propagation and preservation of old-grown Chuncho cacaos
- Educate farmers in organic and forest-friendly agricultural practices
- Preserve and replenish cacao forests that protect the Andean slopes and watersheds
- Collaboration with a small family-run Condor conservation project (Ccochahuasi Animal Sanctuary) in the Cusco region, with the purpose of supporting the first release of two Andean Condors



1

fermentation and
drying center
established



1

condor family
released
in the wild

328

hectares of old
Chuncho

5

persons trained
in post-harvest
handling

100%

Climate-positive
supply chain

50

farmers receive
Original Beans'
premium prices



29

female farmers
empowered



To learn, view and hear more visit our

[Photo Gallery](#) and [Project and Impact Tracker](#) pages

Please reach out to us if you would like to taste a cacao—or chocolate—sample or if you want to hear more about the bean, region, growers, and supply chain. We would love to tell you more and explore how we can unite our efforts to make the world better with chocolate.

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