



Why our Ecuadorian cacao is so special

NEWS

It's not just about what's in the mug. It's about where it comes from, too.

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Photos courtesy of Imlak'esh Organics

Our SuperLattes tell a story about people, places, and food. Sure, we love the health-boosting ingredients and delicious flavors, but for us, each recipe is our opportunity to advocate for sustainability, small-scale farmers, and suppliers who believe in transparency. From the [Golden](#) that uses Diaspora Co. heirloom turmeric direct from a family farm in India to our [Coffee](#) from a Colombian cooperative funding environmental and social programs in the region, each of our blends incorporates our values of ethical sourcing in a unique way.

So when it came to our new [Rose Cacao SuperLatte](#), we knew this mood-enhancing, heart-opening drink and its central ingredient had to give back in more ways than one. So we partnered with our friends at [Imlak'esh Organics](#) (Fun fact: co-founder Hannah was on their team before starting Clevr!) to source the best cacao on the planet. From the native rainforest region where it's grown to the local farmers it supports, here's what makes our newest blend and the cacao we use in it so special:



Beyond Organic

A few things cacao trees love: shade, rich soil, and a diversity of plant neighbors. But with demand for this superfood booming, many corporations are growing cacao in full-sun monoculture forests, cultivating just the one crop to maximize yield and revenue as opposed to nurturing an eclectic ecosystem that mimics nature.

But research shows that monoculture farming leads to high risk of disease and pests, degrades soil, and encourages slash-and-burn agriculture that contributes to deforestation and the release of greenhouse gases. ([Science Direct](#), 2019; [Columbia University Press](#), 2005). And not-so-fun fact: Organic agriculture is important, but not enough of a benchmark. Thanks to the industrialization of agriculture, both conventional and organic crops are often farmed in destructive monocultures ([Encyclopedia of Ecology](#), 2019; [The Indian Nitrogen Assessment](#), 2017).

We believe it's our responsibility to improve our relationship to the land and preserve its health for future generations. That's why we chose cacao grown through regenerative farming, which helps rebuild healthy soil, trap carbon instead of releasing it into the atmosphere, and create healthy ecosystems ([Regeneration International, 2017](#)). By intercropping a variety of plants among the heirloom cacao trees, the result is a dynamic agroforest that benefits all life—not just the cash crops ([Sustainable Agriculture Reviews, 2016](#)). So you can have your cacao, and do good by the planet, too.



Full-body Flavor

Native to the coastal rainforests of Ecuador, our heirloom varietal is prized for its superior flavor and aroma. It's shade-grown at an elevation of 500–1,000 feet, infusing the cacao with notes of the ocean air, volcanic soil, and rainforest's diverse collection of flora and fauna. Think earthy coffee undertones paired with a creamy, nutty middle note, and a fruity mango finish.



Prioritizing People

Our cacao is harvested by a cooperative of 400 small family farmers in Ecuador who are paid 12% above a Fair Trade wage. Besides providing more equitable pay, this "regenerative premium" incentivizes farmers to grow their cacao through these sustainable, forward-thinking practices that improve soil quality, protect the rainforest, sequester carbon, and help reverse the damaging effects of climate change.

Rose Cacao is our take on a decadent, mood-boosting hot chocolate that nurtures not just your own well-being, but the health of our community and environment, too.



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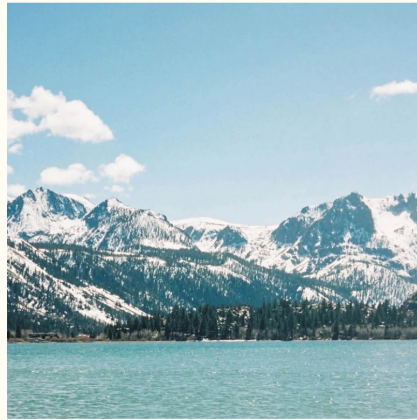
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Archana is an Ojai, California-based writer and editor obsessed with coffee, travel, and her golden retriever. She's written for Vogue, Afar, Prose, and more. When she's not writing, you can find Archana on the trails at golden hour.



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