**The Sweet History of Chocolate**

A long time ago, in a faraway land called Central America, there were people known as the Mayans and the Aztecs. These ancient civilizations are believed to be the first to discover chocolate, but their chocolate was very different from the sweet bars we eat today. They made a bitter drink from cocoa beans, which they called “xocolatl”, meaning “bitter water.”

The drink was so important that cocoa beans were even used as money! Imagine buying things with chocolate! Only the rich and powerful, like kings and warriors, could enjoy this special drink. They believed it gave them strength and energy. In the 1500s, Spanish explorers like Hernán Cortés brought cocoa beans to Europe.

At first, people in Europe didn’t like the bitter drink. But when they mixed it with sugar, it became very popular, and soon, chocolate spread across the world. It wasn’t until the 1800s that chocolate was made into solid bars for eating, thanks to inventions in Europe. Today, chocolate is one of the most loved treats in the world. All thanks to those ancient civilizations who first discovered the magic of cocoa beans!

This story shows how something we all love—chocolate—has a long and interesting history, going back thousands of years!