

# Sir Hans Sloane: The Inventor of Chocolate Milk?

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## Introduction

Urban legend in the United Kingdom attributed Sir Hans Sloane (Hans Sloane, 1660-1753) with the invention of chocolate milk. Evidence suggests that he did not invent the drink, but he may have helped to globalize it.



Sir Hans Sloane, Rysbrack, 1756, Terracotta Bust, British Museum, London, United Kingdom



Palmerston Gold Chocolate, Cartier, 1700, Cups, British Museum, London, United Kingdom

## Conclusion

Primary sources suggest that Sir Hans Sloane did not invent chocolate milk, but he did play a role in its introduction and popularization in Europe. His donated collections help contextualize his introduction to chocolate drinks in Jamaica, and were key components in founding the British Library, the British Museum, and the National History Museum. His influence has endured, both in our museums and in our refrigerators.

## Bibliography:

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3. Eveleth, R. (2014, February 12). *Chocolate milk was invented in Jamaica*. Smithsonian.com. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/chocolate-milk-was-invented-jamaica-180949734/>
4. Price, J. (2019, April 18). *Sir Hans Sloane and the story of Chocolate*. Britain The Official Magazine. <https://www.britain-magazine.com/features/sir-hans-sloane-and-chocolate/#:~:text=Locals%20drank%20the%20bean%20with%20water%20but%20Sloane,19th%20century%20the%20mixture%20inspired%20the%20Cadbury%20brothers.>
5. Rysbrack, John Michael. (1756). *Hans Sloane* [Bust]. The British Museum, London, United Kingdom. [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H\\_1756-0619-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1756-0619-1) (Rysbrack, 1756)

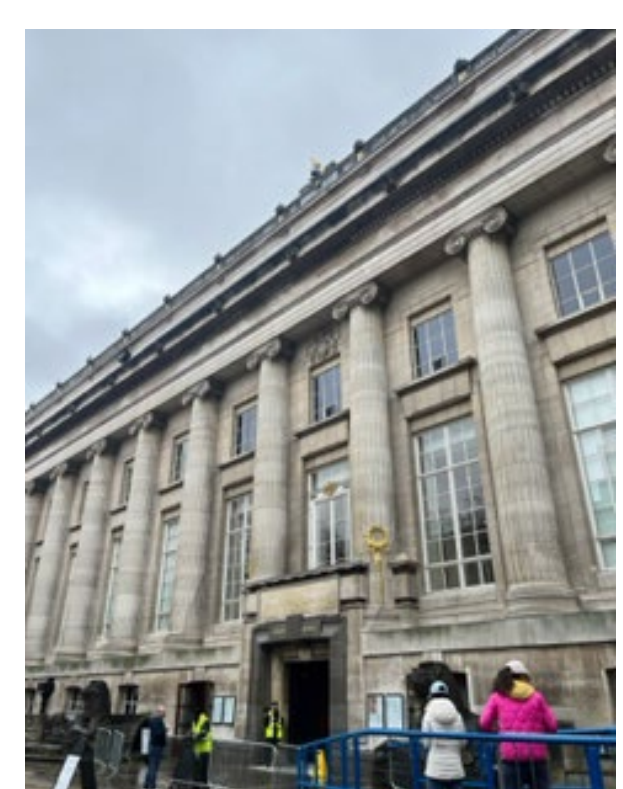
## Key points

- Drinking chocolate existed in Europe prior to Sir Hans Sloane, but it was bitter (Cartier, 1700).
- While serving as a physician in Jamaica (Delbourgo, 2017), Sir Hans Sloane saw a popular drink being served: cold chocolate with sugar and spices. He thought it was “nauseous” and added milk (Eveleth, 2014).
- Sir Sloane adapted an existing recipe and sold his invention in Europe. By selling chocolate milk as a medicinal product, Sir Sloane would be given credit for chocolate milk’s invention (Eveleth, 2014).
- As a testament to his influence, both the British Museum and the British Library have a bust of Sir Hans Sloane to this day (Rysbrack, 1756).
- The Cadbury brothers were inspired by Sir Sloane’s recipe, helping the brothers start their company in 1824. (Price, 2019).

## Visual Evidence



Cadbury Chocolate For Sale, Tesco Express, March 2024



Entrance to the British Museum, March 2024

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