

FOOD

The Chocolate Hunter



Frederick Schilling

For three months a year Frederick Schilling searches the world's rain forests for unique cacao beans. He's trekked in the remotest parts of Madagascar and Bali, he buys beans in person from indigenous Amazonian tribes, and on his most recent trip to Central America he brought back an ankle swollen to softball size from a spider bite. "It's hot and humid," he says of his job, "but I really do appreciate exploring regions of the world that a lot of people don't see."

Schilling, 36, is the founder of Oregon-based Dagoba Chocolate, which introduced the world to single-origin organic chocolate in 2005. "Most chocolate is made by blending beans from all over to produce a neutral, safe flavor," he explains. "Single origins allow the consumer to really taste the cacao from a particular farm or region."

Dagoba's latest single-origin bar is Ayacucho, from the remote headwaters of Venezuela's Orinoco River. "Two or three times a year the Cepei tribe canoes down the Orinoco, a 15-day trip, bringing wild-harvested cacao to Puerto Ayacucho," Schilling says. "I happened to be there at the right time."

—ANNE SASSO

