

How to make: Tsokolateng tablea (Filipino hot chocolate drink)



It's so funny that when you Google "tablea," most of the Filipino websites that appear in the search results pages say that *tsokolateng tablea* translates to "cacao chocolate." Huh? Chocolate is made from cacao so "cacao chocolate" is redundant. *Tablea* refers to blocks of cacao which, in Filipino cuisine, are heated with milk to make a hot chocolate drink. My grandparents used to serve this hot drink on Christmas Eve. My mother-in-law introduced me to the Antonio Pueo brand of *tablea*.

What's the difference between *tablea* and the more modern chocolate drink mixes that proliferate? If you've tried both, you'd know the difference in taste and in texture. It's the memory of those hot chocolate drinks made from *tableas* during my childhood that is probably the reason why I could never appreciate powdered chocolate mixes. I'm more likely to drop dark chocolate bars into a cup of hot milk or coffee than tear open a packet of powdered chocolate mix.

It's the fat content that makes the difference. When cacao is processed into cocoa powder, most of the cocoa butter is lost. What cocoa powder has lost is retained in the *tablea*. The term *tablea* itself appears to have been brought over by the Spaniards, probably a diminutive of *tabla* or "plank" — small plank, in other words, which illustrates something solid in contradistinction with cocoa powder.

But why all this talk about *tablea* which is traditionally associated with Christmas? Well, it doesn't have to be Christmas to enjoy a rich cup of hot chocolate. Who needs an occasion for that?



My friend and fellow lawyer, Eric, came over to the house recently and gave me a tube of Lola Consuelo's *tsokolateng tablea*. My grandmother was named Consuelo but she's not the Lola Consuelo whose heirloom recipe became the *tableas* in the tube that Eric gave me. I made a cup of chocolate drink with them and it was heavenly.

If you're a *tablea* fan and you've tried different brands, you'd know that there are counterfeit *tableas* in the market that taste like old cardboard. Lola Consuelo's *tsokolateng tablea* is the real deal. That's why the contact numbers of the manufacturer are clearly visible in the photo above. Lola Consuelo's *tsokolateng tablea* is one brand I am happy to recommend. There's a blog that [says](#) the makers Lola Consuelo's *tsokolateng tablea* participated in Eastwood Mall's weekend gourmet market back in November. Perhaps, they are still there.



So, did I use the traditional *batidor* to make my hot chocolate drink? When have I ever been traditional? I don't even own a *batidor*. Here's my ultra modern way of making a cup of hot chocolate drink with *tableas*.

Ingredients

- about a cup of milk
tsokolate tablea (how much depends on how rich you want your chocolate drink)

Instructions

1. Pour milk into a cup (or mug, if you want a large serving). Drop the *tableas* into the milk. I don't know the exact proportions, a lot depends on how strong you want your drink and the quality of the *tableas*, but for the cup you see in the photo (capacity is about three-fourths of a standard measuring cup), I added four *tableas*. Heat on HIGH in the microwave for a minute. Use a teaspoon to stir the drink and to crush whatever large chunks there are. And that's it. Enjoy your drink. I surely enjoyed mine.

Cooking time (duration): 5

Number of servings (yield): *1 minute*

Meal type: *breakfast / snack*

Ref.: <http://feastasia.casaveneracion.com/tsokolateng-tablea-filipino-hot-chocolate-drink/>

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