

Cokelat Monggo: How sweet it is

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By hand: About 80 percent of production at Cokelat Monggo is done manually, from melting and tempering to molding.

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It was 18 years ago when Cokelat Monggo was first produced in Yogyakarta in a factory named Thierry Delormeau. Today, the chocolate, originally named Hula Gula-Gula, has become one of the most popular snack gifts from Yogyakarta.

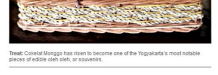
Production began in Delormeau's house and was only handled by Delormeau and his partner, Susanto, who is known as Ash for short. The business currently employs 100 workers in a house that sits on a corner of Kota Gede, Yogyakarta.

"We've been meeting, but it's bigger than the one we first occupied," said Edward Rianto Pucisawati, the co-founder of Cokelat Monggo. Otherwise, he says, there's not much difference from when they first started out.

About 80 percent of production is done manually, from melting and tempering to packing, Ash said. "We've maintained a manual method, which makes Cokelat Monggo different from most chocolate products."

Ash, now head of production, has been with Cokelat Monggo from the start. As a graduate of a hotel business school, Ash started working with Delormeau when he was with an NGO in Yogyakarta. "I used to make the candy myself, now I'm supervising the employees," he said.

The Cokelat Monggo factory and showroom is now an attraction, joining in people eager to see snacks as they are crafted from 100 percent cocoa butter. Cokelat and Delormeau once called the chocolate from Cocoa Mania before settling on Cokelat Monggo — monggo meaning "beloved" in Javanese, "has welcoming hosts."



These Cokelat Monggo chocolate products include one of the Yogyakarta's most notable pieces of artisanal confectionery: the nut.

Denik, 25, a tourist from the US, said that he had never missed a chance to visit to Cokelat Monggo when in town. The NGO worker says his favorite is the "vanilla chocolate." "I always come to Monggo, and I suggest that my friends come here, too."

At Cokelat Monggo, visitors can have their own Javanese-style Wily Wilya experience, watching chocolate as it is made and, of course, enjoying live samples.

The women who make the chocolate can be seen working with sterile gloves and masks while toiling in the production room as tourists snap their photos.

"Cokelat Monggo is a frequent destination of study tours by school and college students as well as commuters," said Tanjung Andari, who is in charge of the factory's marketing and communications. Chocolates is everywhere in the room as he speaks.

As a large pan of granule paste is stirred, some mix cocoa while others cut and chop macadamia nuts to prepare chocolate fillings. "These nuts are hard to find in Indonesia. They're available in limited quantities," Ash explained.

In the next room over a dozen workers arrange and clean candy molds in three shaping cocoa paste into various chocolate pieces.

When the snacks were called Hula Cokelat (chocolate skin) and produced by Delormeau and Ash, they came in 12 flavors. Now, Cokelat Monggo has more than 20 flavors. The fillings, according to Ash, were the reason behind the original name. "The chocolate is like the skin covering the variously flavored fillings," she said.

After moulding, chocolate is wrapped in aluminum foil. Some bars are given special packaging instead of aluminum foil, usually for special occasions, such as Valentine's Day.



All work: Women work with macadamia nuts to craft chocolate treats. The nut is a rarity in Indonesia.

A secondary wrapper is then applied. Cokelat Monggo uses recycled paper to pack its chocolate. "Using the kind of paper has been one of our commitments to environment conservation," Tanjung says.

Some wrappers emphasize the city's cultural heritage, featuring wayang kulit shadow puppets, Javanese dancers and city landmarks — all popular as special orders.

Cokelat Monggo has three showrooms: Kota Gede and Tiroduran, in Yogyakarta and Bandung, West Java, and has 400 sales points in Java, Bali and Lampung.

For those looking for their own Omong Loempeng experience, however, the day-long survey of chocolate making, can only be done at the Cokelat Monggo factory and showroom in Kota Gede.

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@mefroms...
It happens to happen one day I guess. Cokelat Monggo has been a secret of mine for some time because I never miss the chance to visit when I'm in town. I've tried each of its popular and available ones. One no longer needs to travel to Central Java to enjoy it's delight.

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