



Is “Buy Maïa Ceremonial Cacao” a Scam? PodSaveChocolate, Episode 179

Host: *Clay Gordon, TheChocolateLife*

The TL;DR

In this episode of PodSaveChocolate, host Clay Gordon uses a Facebook-advertised product called “Buy Maïa ceremonial cacao” as a case study in skeptical consumer research.

Rather than debating whether ceremonial cacao is legitimate as a category, Gordon methodically exposes the red flags in Buy Maïa’s marketing: fabricated Trustpilot ratings, a nonexistent medical expert, inconsistent landing pages, misleading product descriptions, and pricing that makes its “ultra-rare Criollo cacao” claim mathematically impossible. Gordon concludes that while ceremonial cacao isn’t inherently a scam, this specific product almost certainly misrepresents what it is and what it can do, and he walks viewers through the exact steps they can take to reach similar conclusions about any product they encounter online.

Introduction: What This Episode Is Really About

Welcome to PodSaveChocolate. I’m your host, Clay Gordon, and today we’re not doing a deep dive into what ceremonial cacao is or isn’t. Instead, what we’re doing is examining a specific brand that *claims* to be ceremonial cacao, using our examination of those claims as a vehicle for something more important: How do you become a better consumer of information you find on the internet?

Before we dive in, a couple of housekeeping notes.

This episode, like every episode of PodSaveChocolate, is supported by members of TheChocolateLife.

If you’re watching live, let me know where in the world you’re connecting from. I’ll give you a shout-out on screen. And if you have questions about anything I’m covering today, put those in the comments too, and I’ll get to them if I can.

The Facebook Post That Started It All

A longtime member of TheChocolateLife sent me a link earlier this week. It came from a Facebook account called The Cacao Research Institute, and right away, that name deserves scrutiny. The page claims to be a magazine, has about 3,500 followers, follows nobody, and has no information in its About section: no contact details, no photos, no mentions. Most tellingly, you cannot navigate to the post in question from the Cacao Research Institute profile itself. That's red flag number one.

The post promotes a product called “Buy Maïa ceremonial cacao,” illustrated with AI-generated imagery and featuring a claim I've never encountered before: that cacao counters the daily progression of artery plaque. There's also a “Buy Two, Get Three” offer with a countdown timer. That pressure mechanic is another red flag.

When you click the link, it takes you not to the Cacao Research Institute, but to a company called Buy Maïa. There's nothing on the Facebook post disclosing any connection between the two. That's red flag number two.

The Anatomy of a Click Funnel

What we're dealing with here is a classic landing page, or what the industry calls a click funnel. Depending on which link you click, including whether it has a Facebook tracking cookie attached, you land on a different version of an offer. I found at least two distinct landing pages for Buy Maïa, and they are substantially different from each other and from Buy Maïa's own homepage.

On one landing page, the pitch centers on cacao and cardiovascular health, featuring a countdown timer, a Trustpilot rating, and the hook: “Harvard scientist discovers this superfood that fights artery plaque and controls blood pressure.” On another landing page, reached via a “naked” URL without tracking parameters, the focus shifts almost entirely to nattokinase, an enzyme derived from the Japanese fermented food natto that has shown some evidence of reducing arterial plaque, and barely mentions cacao at all.

This “A/B testing” approach is deliberate. They're running experiments to determine which version of the offer converts more visitors into buyers. When you click through, you're part of that experiment.

Fact-Checking the Claims

The Trustpilot Rating

One landing page claims Buy Maïa has a 4.9 average rating on Trustpilot. I went to Trustpilot and checked. Buy Maïa's actual rating is 2.9, based on only two reviews. That is a brazen misrepresentation of an easily verifiable fact, and it tells you a great deal about how this company operates. An associated website, "Try Maïa," has 10 reviews with a 2.0 average rating. **Takeaway:** *You cannot trust the 4.9 figure.*

The Medical Expert

The landing page features a Dr. Elena Vasquez, described as a long-practicing cardiologist who endorses the product but "requested anonymity" because, the page implies, the medical establishment would come after her for promoting a natural alternative to pharmaceuticals. I searched for Dr. Elena Vasquez. There is no independent footprint: no hospital affiliation, no clinic bio, no board certifications, no published research. The expert does not appear to be a real person.

A "doctor hiding from big pharma" framing is a recognizable conspiracy theory template. It's another red flag.

The Harvard Research Claim

One landing page states that "Harvard-proven" research backs these cardiovascular claims. There is no link to any study. Anywhere. If there were genuinely a Harvard research study supporting these claims, they would link to it; it would be the centerpiece of their marketing. The absence of a citation when a citation would be your strongest asset is itself evidence that the citation doesn't exist, or that the research doesn't say what they claim it says.

Note: high-flavanol cacao can modestly improve endothelial function and may contribute slightly to blood pressure management in some individuals, probably those not already on medication. But, that is a far cry from countering arterial plaque, which this product does not do (and likely can't do) at the level claimed.

The Nattokinase Contradiction

Several landing pages advertise that Buy Maïa is “enhanced with nattokinase.” But Buy Maïa’s own homepage describes the product as “100% pure ceremonial cacao” with no added ingredients. If nattokinase were in the product, it would be required to appear on the ingredients list. It doesn’t, because the product is apparently just cacao.

Takeaway: *The two versions of the offer are making fundamentally different health claims about what appears to be the same product. This is **not** a minor inconsistency.*

The Product Itself: What Are You Actually Buying?

Pricing

The Buy One, Get One (BOGO) offer is priced at \$49, approximately \$2.33 per ounce, or about \$38 a pound. For reference, genetically pure Criollo cacao, which Buy Maïa claims to use, trades for \$20 or more per pound for the raw beans, before any processing. There is no realistic scenario in which ultra-rare Criollo cacao can be sold as a finished product at \$38 a pound *for powder*. The math doesn’t work.

The multi-buy offers don’t actually discount the per-unit price. Three bags at \$49 each is \$147, with no reduction. The only thing you save is shipping, plus you receive a free ebook of undisclosed content.

What the Nutrition Label Reveals

By digging through image search results rather than the Buy Maïa website, which does not display a nutrition label anywhere, I found a label image. It shows the product has roughly 10 to 14% fat content per serving. Here’s why that matters: a genuine cacao paste (ground cacao nibs, the traditional ceremonial form) contains approximately 47 to 53% fat. Buy Maïa is selling low-fat cocoa powder.

That fat content is a strong indicator that what’s being sold is a heavily processed derivative, not ceremonial-grade cacao paste. And, cocoa powder is produced at high temperatures that degrade many of the very flavanols the product claims to deliver.

Package Size Discrepancy

The Buy Maïa website lists the product as 300 grams with 30 servings of 10 grams each. The Try Maïa website, a nearly identical site with slightly different fonts, shows 200 grams with 6-gram servings. They’re priced identically. If you’re buying from Try Maïa, you may be getting significantly less product for the same price.

Missing Information

The Buy Maïa website does not show:

- The nutrition label or full ingredients list
- Where the product is made or by whom (“Made by,” “Made for,” or “Distributed by” language is absent)
- Any organic certification (though “organic” is claimed)
- Any third-party lab testing for heavy metals or purity (though tested is claimed)

“Non-GMO” is listed as a feature, but there is no commercially grown genetically modified cacao anywhere in the world. That claim costs them nothing and signals nothing.

A Word on Ceremonial Cacao as a Category

Viewer Juan Gonzalez (Canada) commented that ceremonial cacao, as a category, is largely a scam invented by the wellness and raw food movements, disconnected from any authentic indigenous tradition.

My view is a bit more nuanced. If you attend a cacao ceremony in a cacao-producing country (e.g., Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, southern Mexico,), and it’s led by an indigenous shaman with genuine connections to the ethno-religious history of cacao consumption in Mesoamerica, that ceremony can carry real cultural legitimacy.

Cacao genuinely *does* contain compounds, e.g., theobromine, anandamide precursors, serotonin-related chemicals, that alter brain chemistry. There are likely neurochemical reasons why early Maya, Olmec, and other Mesoamerican cultures elevated cacao to sacred status. That’s not myth; it’s biochemistry.

However: if what’s being described as “ceremonial cacao” is being marketed by non-indigenous people to gullible consumers with uncertain provenance and inflated prices, then the skepticism is warranted and cultural misappropriation should be considered the default position.

If you simply want to use a pure, unprocessed cacao product as part of a personal meditative ritual, that’s entirely reasonable. What you should look for is paste, not powder. By the time cacao is processed into powder at industrial temperatures, many of the health-giving compounds you’re paying for have been degraded.



How to Evaluate Any Product Like This

Here is a practical takeaway. When you encounter a product making extraordinary health claims online, before spending money or giving away your personal data:

1. Check any ratings claims independently. If a site says it has a 4.9 on Trustpilot, go to Trustpilot yourself.
2. Search the cited experts. A real cardiologist has a hospital affiliation, has published papers, and board listings. If you find nothing, the cited “expert” *may* not exist.
3. Look for linked research. If a “Harvard study” is cited without a link, that’s a red flag. Real research gets linked.
4. Compare landing pages. Search the company name directly and compare what you find to what the ad showed you. Inconsistencies are telling.
5. Find the nutrition label. Image search the product name. If the company doesn’t show it on their site, find it elsewhere and examine the information on the label.
6. Check prices across platforms. Search for the product on Amazon. Dramatic price differences between the company site and third-party sellers warrant scrutiny.
7. Apply the null hypothesis. *Your default position should always be skepticism.* Something is not true until demonstrated to be true. Don’t hand over your credit card, billing address, and email until the claims hold up to basic scrutiny.

I reached close to 100% certainty that Buy Maïa Ceremonial Cacao products were not legitimate in less than five minutes. The additional research I’ve shared here deepened the picture, but the core case was made quickly. You don’t need my level of domain knowledge. You just need to slow down, open a second tab, and check.



Conclusion

To be clear: I am not declaring that all ceremonial cacao is a scam. If you find an indigenous producer with genuine connections to the history and practice, or if you simply want a pure, honest cacao product to use in a personal morning ritual, there are real options out there.

Look for paste, not powder. Verify sourcing. Read the label.

What I am saying is that Buy Maïa, and its companion site Try Maïa, is almost certainly misrepresenting what it sells and what it can do. The evidence for that conclusion is available to anyone willing to spend five minutes checking.

If you come across another chocolate or cacao product making unusual health or sourcing claims, let me know: If it's of broad enough interest and I haven't covered it, I'll look at it.

Thanks to Juan Gonzalez for the thoughtful comment and question. And as I say at the end of every episode: *"If you're working with chocolate and you're not having fun, you are doing it wrong."*

Until next time, ciao.

Sources

[The link to the Cacao Research Institute FB post](#) that started this adventure. (You probably) need to have a FB account and be logged in to view this post.)

Is Maïa Ceremonial Cacao a Scam? | #PSC 179

Episode 179 of PodSaveChocolate examines the health claims made about and for Maïa's "#Ceremonial Cacao." Are they ...



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TCL LIVE | AskTCL: Ceremonial Cacao & Cacao Ceremonies

Episode 135 of #TheChocolateLifeLIVE is LIVE from 10:00 AM PDT / 1:00 PM EDT on Tuesday, September 26th.



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[Click to read the above post.](#) This post includes many more resource links.

Visit the following sites **with caution**. Links are included here so you can fact-check me, if you wish. Keep in mind that the episode on TheChocolateLife was dated February 10th, 2026 and changes might have been made since then.

- [BuyMaia.com](#)
- [TryMaia.com](#)



Notes on Using LLMs as Research Assistants

Over the eighteen months or so, I've been refining a growing set of LLM prompts (that now include /Summarize, /Explain, /Analyze, /Fact-Check, /Self-Check, and /Rewrite) that I run against source content before undertaking more detailed research on my own.

The prompts provide starting points: flagging unsupported claims, identifying missing citations, and noting suspicious patterns. I then take those flagged areas and apply my own expertise and experience to follow up.

You don't need to go as deep as I do, but tailored AI prompts to quickly flag obvious (and not-so-obvious) inconsistencies in a product's claims are genuinely useful tools to apply before you commit your own time or money.

Note: This document was created using a /cleanTranscript skill created in ChatGPT, which I then refined using Claude's skill creation tools. This skill was run against the transcript generated by YouTube. The cleaned transcript was then edited and formatted by a human – this is what you are reading.

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