

CLAIMS

1. A cocoa powder composition characterized in that it comprises, on a dry weight basis, 75-99.5% cocoa powder having an average particle size of 2-20 microns, and 0.5-20% of at least one hydrophilic agent, wherein the at least one hydrophilic agent is selected from the group consisting of: one or more sugar alcohols, one or more sugars and mixtures of thereof, and wherein the cocoa powder is coated with the at least one hydrophilic agent.
2. A cocoa powder composition according to claim 1, characterized in that the one or more sugar alcohols is selected from sorbitol, erythritol, maltitol, and mixtures of two or more thereof.
3. A cocoa powder composition according to claim 1, characterized in that the one or more sugars is selected from the group consisting of: sucrose, glucose, fructose, and mixtures of two or more thereof,
4. A cocoa powder composition according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the cocoa powder has an average particle size of 8-12 microns.
5. A cocoa powder composition according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that it further comprises an emulsifier, preferably in an amount of no more than 15% by weight.
6. A sweetened cocoa powder composition characterized in that it comprises a cocoa powder composition according to any one of the preceding claims and a bulking sugar, preferably sucrose.
7. A sweetened cocoa powder composition according to claim 6, characterized in that the cocoa powder composition and bulking sugar are present in a dry weight ratio of from 1:1 to 1:9, preferably from 1:2 to 1:5, more preferably from 3:7 to 1:4.
8. A sweetened cocoa powder composition according to claim 6 or claim 7, characterized in that it has a wet-lability, measured according to Method 1, of less than 30 seconds.
9. A method for producing a cocoa powder composition characterized in that it comprises the steps of: coating a cocoa powder or cocoa cake with a hydrophilic agent selected from the group consisting of: one or more sugar alcohols, one or more sugars and mixtures thereof and, milling the coated cocoa powder and/or cocoa cake to achieve an average particle size of 2-20 microns; wherein, on a dry weight basis, cocoa powder is used in an amount of 75-99.5% and the hydrophilic agent is used in an amount of 0.5-20%.

10. A method according to claim 9, characterized in that the hydrophilic agent is in a liquid form.
11. A method according to claim 10, characterized in that the liquid hydrophilic agent is selected from the group consisting of: one or more molten sugar alcohols and/or sugars, one or more aqueous sugar alcohols and/or sugar solutions and mixtures thereof.
12. A method according to claim 11, characterized in that the aqueous sugar alcohol and/or sugar solution comprises water in an amount of up to 10% by weight, based on the total dry weight of cocoa powder or cocoa cake.
13. A method according to any one of claims 9 to 12, characterized in that the coating step comprises: spraying the hydrophilic agent onto the cocoa powder and/or cocoa cake; or mixing the hydrophilic agent into the cocoa powder and/or cocoa cake.
14. A beverage and/or foodstuff comprising a composition according to any one of claims 1 to 8 or obtainable according to the method of any one of claims 9 to 13.