

The Grand History of Cannabis

Big Bang - Almost 14 billion years ago and a few hundred million more, everything started, and for cannabis too. From that moment on, the essential elements of life began to slowly and meticulously arrange themselves. It was much later when life exploded into billions of manifestations of this inexplicable desire to live. Indian Brahmins, steppe shamans, Toltec priests, Celtic druids, Bantu sorcerers, and many others, tried to elucidate the mystery of life. As for Mossy Giant, the artist claims that the endocannabinoid system existed long before the Big Bang.

10.000 BC - It took a long time for cannabis to finally emerge. The origin of this plant (and all other plants) goes back to the “embryophytes”, which appeared on Earth 540 million years ago by breaking off from green seaweed. With the passage of time as their best ally, they gradually colonized the land and diversified into many groups and subgroups until we reached the “cannabaceae” family, where our favorite plant finally flourished: a cousin of “Humulus Lupulus”, a beer hop with which it shares certain terpenes. According to the latest research, the earliest remains of cannabis found in Asia date back 10,000 years, and from there it colonized the rest of the world with the indispensable help of human interactions.

2700 BC - Emperor Shen Nong, also known as the “Divine Farmer”, is a revered figure in Chinese culture and mythology and is regarded as the father of agriculture and traditional medicine. And so it was that he discovered tea and cannabis, whose use he quickly recommended. However, aware of its effects, Shen Nong warned about cannabis: “Take a small dose and you will communicate with spirits, take too much and you will be attacked by demons and walk like a madman”. Curious as a cat, he died of poisoning after tasting an unknown plant. Centuries later, the knowledge of the Herbalist Emperor was compiled in a book listing 365 medicinal herbs, the “Classic of Materia Medica”, in which cannabis is classified as a fundamental herb.

Presented by:



The Grand History of Cannabis

1500 BC - Shiva is one of the great gods of Hinduism along with Brahma and Vishnu. Symbol of the opposing powers of creation and destruction, he is the master of ascetics and magicians. Legend has it that when Shiva drank the poison meant to eradicate creation, he treated his pains with '*bhang*', a cannabis-based drink. Every year, during *Maha Shivratri*, Indians remember the day when Shiva saved the universe. The siddhus, the holy men of India, smoke *chillum* after *chillum* in the hope of getting closer to their favorite deity. While Hinduism makes a clear reference to cannabis, it is not the only religion to do so. Thus, in the Old Testament "Book of Exodus", we find the recipe of the oil for the anointing of the sacrament, which is composed of olive oil, cinnamon, myrrh, acacia, and '*qaneh bosem*', which is none other than cannabis. If the ways of the Lord are inscrutable, quite understandably, it is because they are often paved with cannabis.

450 BC - Herodotus of Halicarnassus is considered the father of history. The only work of his that has come down to us, "Histories", recounts the wars between the Greeks and the Persians in the 5th century BC, and it is there where he describes the different cultures that reigned at the time: Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, Arabs, and many more. Through his book, cannabis makes its grand entrance into Western culture. Herodotus describes how the Scythians, a nomadic people coming from Asia, used to consume cannabis by confining themselves in large tents, while throwing cannabis on stones heated in a brazier. And so *hotboxing* was born.

1000 - During the Viking Age, hemp fibre was the most prized material for making rope and cloth for ships' sails. Prior to the use of hemp, ropes were produced from lime fibre that needed to be renewed often. Stronger, more flexible and a natural anti-fungal, hemp fibre proved essential for long sea voyages and armed raids far from the Vikings' bases.

1300 - Baba Ku, a devout Sufi, was considered by the ancient Afghans to be the representative of the Creator, sent to earth to introduce all mankind to cannabis, to show how to produce hashish, and how to smoke it. A true prophet of cannabis, he travelled the countryside to cure the sick with little black scented pellets. Rumor had it that he could smoke up to 3 kilos of the strongest hashish daily. Before his death, he donated gold and cannabis seeds to 10 Afghan families with the request that they plant them in the Hindu Kush valley.

Presented by:



The Grand History of Cannabis

1500 - Malawi. Cannabis reached the African continent through connections with Arab and Indian traders and spread rapidly across the continent. Although the word “*bong*” has a Thai origin, some of the oldest remains of bongs were found in Africa. They were usually made of ceramic or animal horns. In Malawi, home to some of the tastiest strains on the planet, growers invented an original and efficient way of curing crops by burying the dried stalks and leaving them to cure for some time. This traditional way of curing offered a terpene profile that enriched the herb and ensured a better experience.

1800 - Napoleon. After invading Egypt, a country devoid of alcohol, General Bonaparte’s soldiers indulged unrestrainedly in the new pleasures of cannabis. On October 9, 1800, the future Emperor Napoleon ordered its prohibition, which was a first in the Western world, punishing those who consumed it with a prison sentence of 3 months. Other bans would follow from that date.

1844 to 1849 - ‘Le Club des *Hashischins*’ consisted of a group of intellectuals from that period that included Eugène Delacroix, Alexandre Dumas, Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, Victor Hugo and Honoré de Balzac, among others. They met at the Hôtel de Lauzun, a luxurious private mansion on the banks of the Seine, where the famous sessions of Doctor and Psychiatrist Moreau de Tour were held, and where they consumed ‘*dawamesk*’, a preparation based on honey, pistachios, and cannabis. On the basis of these experiences, Baudelaire wrote “Artificial Paradises”, an essay in which the poet discusses the relationship between drugs and poetic creation, and Moreau de Tour wrote in 1845 his treatise “On Hashish and Mental Alienation”, documenting both the physical and mental benefits of hashish.

1925 - Pierre Du Pont de Nemours was an American industrialist at the head of the petrochemical empire that bears his name, whose innovations are still present today. Like other American entrepreneurs, Pierre Du Pont saw hemp as a threat to the manufacture of his own products: synthetic fibres such as nylon, mylar, or neoprene. In 1936, a new tool arrived to solve a problem that had dragged on for millennia: the debarker machine, which quickly removed the bark from the plant for the production of hemp fibre. The US magazine “Popular Mechanics” described hemp cultivation as “a billion dollar crop”. Seeing his investments in jeopardy, Du Pont teamed up with Harry J. Anslinger and newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst with the goal of launching a sensational and misleading propaganda campaign against *marihuana*. In

Presented by:



The Grand History of Cannabis

1937, the film “Reefer Madness” was released, a documentary that linked cannabis use to personality disorders so severe that they led users to commit terrible crimes. As a result of such bad reputation, the US hemp industry collapsed.

1930 - Harry J. Anslinger, head of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics for three decades, became the mastermind behind the criminalization of cannabis users by imposing the “Marihuana Tax Act” in 1937, which aimed to reduce hemp production by imposing high taxes and paved the way for its subsequent prohibition. Infamous propagandist, petty liar and uninhibited racist. This fanatic of order never ceased to apply a doctrine that continues to this day in many countries.

1930 - Louis Armstrong, composer of “Muggles” (cannabis), was caught with his drummer, Vic Berton, smoking in front of the Cotton Club in Los Angeles. Both were sentenced to six months in prison and fined \$1,000, but the sentence was eventually suspended and he immediately returned to his cannabic love. Armstrong remains the first in a long line of celebrities arrested in connection with its inhalation.

1935 - J. Edward Hoover was the founder and director of the FBI from 1935 until his death in 1972. He and Anslinger formed a devilishly evil and perverse duo. The most powerful man in America put all his power at the service of a vast, multi-pronged inquisition: political persecution, racial oppression, the war on drugs, and grand machinations. He is the biggest villain at the end of the story.

1969 - Richard Nixon. In 1971, the 37th president of the United States officially declared the War on drugs, specifically targeting Latino and African-American communities. Synonymous with the concept of “corrupt president”, he was forced to resign in 1974. Its punitive and counterproductive approach would lead the US down a blind alley, while encouraging many countries to take the same path.

1984 - Ronald Reagan. A mediocre actor and governor of California, he had all it took to become a lousy US president. He signed the “Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984”, which increased penalties for simple drug possession, established mandatory minimum sentences and simplified procedures for the seizure of civilian property. He became the mastermind behind the war on drugs and the “Mass Incarceration Nation”.

Presented by:



The Grand History of Cannabis

1957 - Jack Kerouac publishes “On the Road” in which, among other things, he proclaims his love of cannabis. He later stated that “wars will be impossible when cannabis becomes legal”. Suddenly, this meant the irruption of cannabis into American literature just as it was beginning to modernize.

1965 - Alan Ginsberg. Poet and a great figure of the ‘*Beat Generation*’, like his friend Kerouac. He is the spiritual father of the ‘*Flower Power*’ and a true cannabis pioneer. He founded the first legalization movement, LEMAR (Legalize Marihuana), whose slogan was “Pot is fun”.

1965 - Raphael Mechoulam. An Israeli scientist, he was the first to isolate and identify the chemical structure of THC, the main psychoactive compound in cannabis. He also discovered the existence of the endocannabinoid system, a complex network of receptors present in the human body and involved in numerous physiological functions. His work had a major impact on the scientific understanding of cannabis and paved the way for future research into its possible medical effects. He received numerous prizes and awards, including the Wolf Prize in Medicine in 2000.

1972 - Mellow Yellow. It was the world’s first coffee shop, a true legend in cannabis mythology. Founded by Wernard Bruining in 1972 in Amsterdam, its immediate success would lead to the opening of many other coffee shops along the same lines. Although it had to close in 2017 for administrative reasons, it will remain the very first one forever. Bruining remains a passionate advocate of cannabis legalization.

1973 - Bob Marley. When his first album with The Wailers, “Catch a Fire”, was released, Bob Marley set the tone with the album cover, which showed him, still a young man, smoking a big joint. It was obvious that he was not going to hide it nor to shy away from it. For Marley, cannabis was more than a recreational drug, it was an essential part of his *Rastafarian* culture and spirituality. He said marihuana had the power to free the mind and promote creative thinking. His prophetic aura, the tenor of his message of peace, love and universal unity, but also of rebellion against the oppressor, place Bob Marley in a special category in the cannabis firmament.

1977 - Peter Tosh, founding member of the group “The Wailers”, wrote some of their best and most famous songs, such as “Get up, Stand up”. He also had a prolific solo career before his death in 1987. A fervent advocate of cannabis legalization, his song

Presented by:



The Grand History of Cannabis

“Legalize it” has been the undisputed anthem of the cannabis movement since its release in 1977. He was arrested by the police for lighting up a joint on stage in front of the President of Jamaica during a concert in Kingston in 1978.

1985 - Jack Herer is undoubtedly the godfather of modern cannabis and the cannabis activist par excellence. In his cult book “The Emperor Wears No Clothes”, published in 1985, he wrote that cannabis could save the planet if only we tapped its full potential. This countercultural manifesto raises questions about the validity of US propaganda and the legitimacy of the war on drugs. The genetics named after him and created in his honor are still popular today.

1988 - Mila Jansen is a true cannabis pioneer and icon. Still very young, this intrepid Dutchwoman opened the first unofficial coffee shop in Amsterdam in 1969 and then left for India until 1988. On her return to Amsterdam, she revolutionized hashish production by creating the *Pollinator* and the *Bubblelator*, the first mechanical trichome separation systems. The “Nederhash” and the “Hash Queen” had just been born.

1996 - The San Francisco Cannabis Buyers Club was the first public dispensary in the US. The club’s founders, Dennis Peron and John Entwistle, co-authored Proposition 215 in 1996, also known as the “Compassionate Use Act”, which allowed Californians to use cannabis for medical purposes. This law, the first of its kind in the world, would pave the way for other states to legalize medical cannabis. Recreational use would follow...

2001 - Soma is the creator of legendary genetics such as *NYC Diesel*, *Lavender* or *Somango*. Through his writings and philosophy, he influenced a whole generation of cannabis lovers, including the artist of the mural in front of you, Mossy Giant, who also designed the logo of the seed company “Soma Seeds”.

2017 - Dagga Couple. Myrtle Clarke & Julian Stobbs are a South African couple (although Julian is of English origin) and founders of an association in favor of the legalization of marijuana in South Africa. Progress in this country is largely due to their fierce fight against the authorities in a scandalous trial dubbed “Trial of the plant”, which led to a certain internationalization of the case. After Uruguay, also Canada and Africa are waking up.

Presented by:



The Grand History of Cannabis

2021 - Fernanda de la Figuera. Also known as “Abuela Cannabis” (the Grand mother of Cannabis), this Spanish activist who died in 2022 was the president of the Spanish political party “Luz Verde” (Green Light), which campaigns for legalization and the Spanish model regarding cannabis. She was forced to sit on the bench three times because of her passion for gardening. The third time in 2019, aged 76, she was sentenced to 9 months in prison. Despite all this, she remained true to her activism and her convictions to the very end. An essential figure of the movement in Spain.

Presented by:

