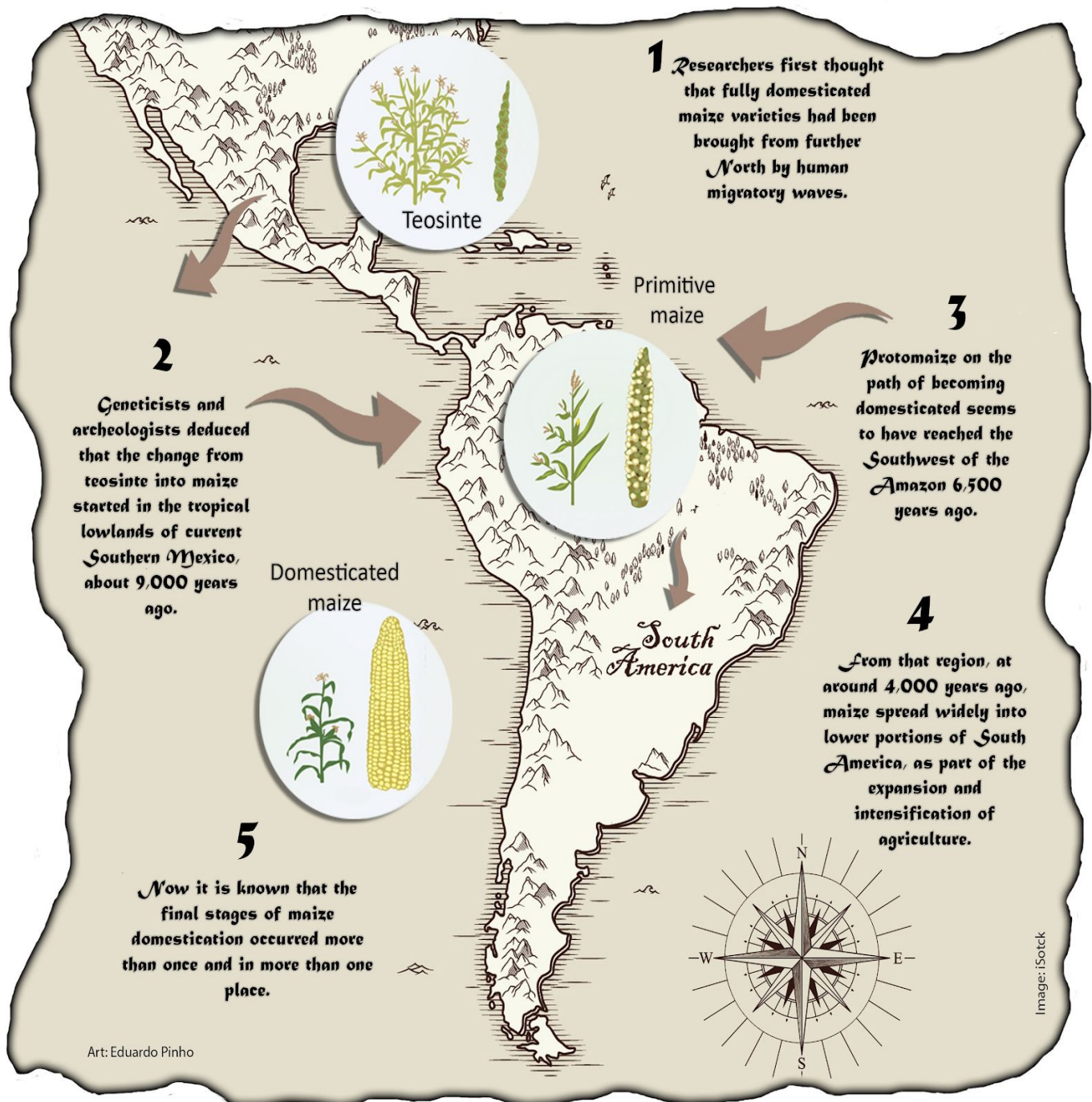


Origins of Popcorn

There are many different types of corn (maize) that originated from wild grasses (Teosinte) grown in Central and South America around 5000 B.C.E. Pre-Columbian indigenous peoples used these wild Teosinte grasses and eventually bred (cultivated) them to produce more kernels that were closer together. Indigenous people from Central Mexico and South America migrated North, bringing corn with them.



*PC: Eduardo Pinho

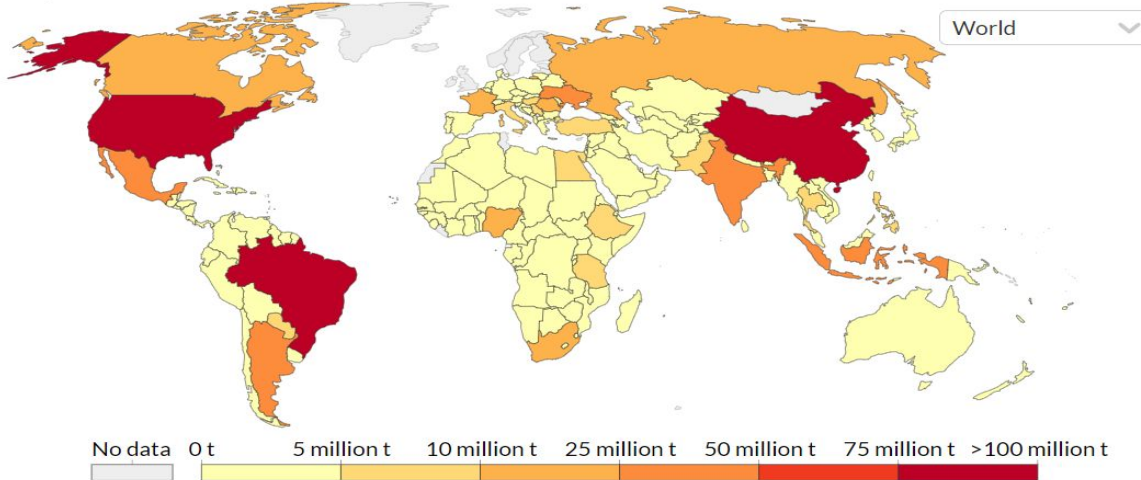
Many countries around the world grow and process corn. In the map below, each country is highlighted in a different color based on how many tonnes (1 tonnes = 2,204 pounds) of corn they process.

Directions: Circle the countries with the most production and if you know the name of that country write your label next to the map. Draw a star next to the country that corn originated from as a wild grass.

Maize production, 2018

Maize production is measured in tonnes.

Our World
in Data



Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

OurWorldInData.org/agricultural-production • CC BY

Popcorn is a special variety of flint corn that has kernels with a hard outer shell (pericarp) that must be heated. When heated, the moisture within the kernels steams the insides and once the outer shell reaches its pressure point it bursts open, releasing their edible insides. Archaeologists and paleobotanists have found thousand year old popcorn kernels in tombs on the coast of Peru that were so well preserved, they were still poppable!



*PC: Popcorn.org

Directions: In the box below, list the similarities and differences you notice between the wild Teosinte grass and the modern corn. As the plant evolved, did it change? How does this wild grass compare to the corn we think of today? How do you think we got different types of corn?

Natural Domestication



Teosinte
(Wild Plant - Zea Mays)



Mutated Hybrid
(Primitive or Intermediate Maize)
Natural Landrace



Maize
(Modern Corn)

*PC: University of Notre Dame

Similarities

Differences

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*PC: Junior Library Guide