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2022

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BEHIND THE COLOMBIAN COFFEE BEAN

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Almost all Colombian coffee producers work on farms that are a few hectares in size. These farmers are craftspeople not afraid of trying out new things and proud of what they do.

A warm and humid wind blows over the lush hills of the Andes. For a brief period of time each year, the white blossoms of the coffee plant release a heady jasmine-like fragrance that fills the streets of the small mountain villages. It is not raining, but people are wearing umbrellas in the street because the Colombian sun is bright and hot. At coffee farms in particular, located more than two kilometres above sea level, it is easy to get sunburnt if you forget to cover up. There are 12 hours of sunlight around the year, so people working here must protect themselves with long sleeves and hats. Even in the hottest hours of the day.

Coffee farms are very often run by the same family for decades and decades. As a general rule, Colombian coffee is grown at small farms spanning a few hectares. Yet coffee farming in Colombia is in no way stuck in the past. Instead, the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation (FNC) is determined to achieve development. It has pledged to make all of the farms it represents sustainability certified by 2027. This is a big deal as Colombia is the world's third-biggest coffee exporter, and the work of almost two million people in the nation of 50 million is in some way related to coffee. At the turn of the year, the FNC is due to publish a concrete code of conduct to reach this goal.

EXPERTS IN COFFEE: COLOMBIAN FARMERS

Individual farmers are also keen to develop the industry and are always



looking for new production methods and cultivars with export company agronomists touring the farms. Development work is interactive, because coffee farming requires a great deal of knowhow and experience in the specific microclimate of each geographical area.

In Colombia, coffee grows on the slopes of the Andes almost throughout the entire length of the country. The coffee plant likes intraday vari-

ation in temperature and, the higher you get on the mountains, the larger the temperature range gets. But at the same time the thinner air at the higher altitudes makes the sun merciless. The delicate coffee tree cannot cope with direct sun and must therefore be intercropped with, for example, banana trees to provide shade. On the other hand, in the northern parts of the country the daily temperatures range from



+30 degrees during the day to +10 degrees at night, but the conditions in the north are also more barren, making it more difficult to grow shade-providing plants. Farmers must also decide whether or not to prune their coffee trees and, if so, how to do it because a cut plant may not yield anything the next year while potentially producing a much bigger yield for the three years following that.

The farmer's income is dependent on the world market price of coffee as well as the value of the Colombian peso. Sustainability certification makes sense for farmers as they get a slightly better price for certified coffee. Although the production of uncertified coffee has also been financially viable in Colombia for several years, profitable coffee farming takes a lot of working hours and competence.





FROM BEAN TO CUP

Individual farmers can always seek to increase their farm's profitability through various coffee exporters' sustainability programmes and by improving their yields through

training and tips provided by agronomists. Together with coffee exporters' agronomists, farmers plan how their yields and quality could be improved.

Farmers know their coffee inside out but from a totally different perspective than end users up here in Northern Europe. Whereas the consumer is mainly interested in what the coffee tastes like and, for example, whether the roast is light or

dark, the farmer does not know the cup profile of the end product. The farmer is interested in the coffee plant's resistance, productivity and ease of picking. This is why the new low-growing and high-yielding Cenicafé 1 variety is expected to be a big success in Colombia.

The coffee that remains in local distribution is bitter, with off-tastes not uncommon, so the taste is rounded off with a lot of sugar.

When a farmer heads for the village on a market day and orders a coffee at the local bar, they typically receive their coffee made with a French press-type plunger, have it very short and perhaps also with plenty of milk.

COFFEE CARNIVAL STARTS THE JOURNEY

The interest in what coffee brewed from the nation's beans tastes like





is increasing in Colombia. Coffee farmers are also often prepared to experiment open-mindedly with new coffees and farming methods. Coffee farming in Colombia still primarily remains a manual process but, despite the long days and the physical intensity of the work, Colombian coffee farmers are proud of their work.

During harvest season, farmers work pretty much around the clock. That is also when there is a carnival atmosphere in the Saturday market days when farmers bring their coffee to the village on mule- or donkeyback or in their jeep and the amount may range from one plastic bag to several sacks of fermented and dried coffee beans. They are ready to embark on their long and multi-stage journey into consumers' coffee cups around the world.

HOW IS COFFEE FROM COLOMBIA PROCESSED?

„First, the skin and pulp of the fruit – called the coffee cherry – are removed and any poor-quality beans discarded. Next, the beans are fermented for 12–24 hours. After this, the beans are in most cases sun-dried, but some farms also have machinery for this purpose. Many still transport their crops to buyers traditionally on muleback.“

The slopes of the Andes have the clearly distinct dry and wet seasons typical of the equatorial climate where summers are rainy from May to November and winters are dry, making them ideal habitats for the coffee plant. The flavours of the coffee may vary considerably between the regions depending on soil, altitude and other natural conditions.

In Colombia there may even be big differences in flavour between

coffees from farms located right next to each other – such distinct microclimates are characteristic of Colombian coffee farming. There are also many different arabica cultivars grown, which also affects flavour.

WHAT DOES COLOMBIAN COFFEE TASTE LIKE?

For example, in Southern Colombia the equatorial sun, the nutrient-rich volcanic soil and the humid air rising from the valleys enable coffee farming at altitudes up to 2,300 metres, which is higher than anywhere else. Coffee originating from these areas has a medium-bodied mouthfeel, clean aroma and high acidity.

In northeastern Andes, coffee is grown at the considerably lower altitudes of 1,000–1,600 metres, producing medium-bodied coffees with balanced acidity that have flavour notes of chocolate and softness and sweetness in the aroma.



“You can spot Colombian coffee on the basis of its characteristic flavours and acidity. In the south the flavours are citrusy, in the central region fruity and herbal and in the north there are traces of nuts and chocolate.”

- Camilo, local farmer



• COLOMBIA •

MEDIUM ROAST

A super smooth, well-rounded blend of Colombian coffees with subtly rich notes of vanilla, guava and lemon balm, it's perfect for every day.

Aroma: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Acidity/Structure: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Body: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Flavor: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Aftertaste: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Contains: 500 g

Type: 100% arabica coffee



• COLOMBIA •

DARK ROAST

Well-balanced and full-bodied, this blend of Colombian is a storied dark roast with notes of Apricot, orange and dark chocolat.

Aroma: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Acidity/Structure: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Body: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Flavor: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Aftertaste: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Contains: 500 g

Type: 100% arabica coffee



THE STORY BEHIND TREE-TOP COFFEE CO.

Tree-top Coffee Company was created in 2022 with a desire to create a different coffee company. Too much coffee is sold today where the consumer has no idea where it comes from.

“We love what we do. And we love it, even more, when we make you and your coffee-loving friends happy!”

Tree-tops coffee is a tribute to our coffee farmers. We visit them, shake their hands and tell their story.

TASTE IS SUBJECTIVE

But quality shouldn't be. So when you choose coffee from **Tree-top Coffee Company**, you choose coffee that lives up to the quality term specialty coffee, which is always freshly roasted at a micro roastery within the last three weeks.

At the same time, you choose to pay your coffee farmer a decent price. And you choose a coffee that is produced with respect for the farm's surrounding nature and environment. We think that's good coffee.

TRANSPARENT SUSTAINABILITY

The coffee industry lacks transparency. All too often, it is impossible for coffee drinkers to decipher where

their coffee comes from, how it is traded and under what conditions it was created. **Tree-top** stands in contrast to this and we are driven by a burning desire to be the exact opposite. Namely, a transparent coffee company that deals directly with our coffee farmers and invests time and money back into their production.

For every kilo of PLASTIC material we use in the production of our Coffee and Tea Brewers, we support

Plasticbank in stopping plastic waste from affecting our marine environment, and in getting recycled plastic as a resource.

100% ORGANIC

When we started **Tree-top**, we decided to only buy organic coffee. This means that our entire product range is organically certified. Colombia has a good selection of organic specialty coffees, and we are happy to be able to roast exceptional coffees without compromising the environment.

It may sound simple, but choosing 100% organic coffee can be a challenge. The farmers who grow organic coffee have to find alternative ways to add nutrients to the soil because they don't use chemical fertilizers. In order to ensure a high biodiversity and a good harvest of high quality, they have to make natural fertilizers, e.g. by composting coffee berries and other organic material.

Although organic coffee production makes high demands to the farmers, we believe that it is important to be organic because it saves the environment from pesticides and helps to promote a polycultural form of cultivation.

COFFEE BEANS OF THE TOP 1%

We never compromise on quality. All our coffee beans are certified and carefully selected from among the world's best specialty coffee varieties.



THANK YOU!

We at **Tree-top Coffee Company** would like to thank you for choosing us. We do everything we can to make the coffee experience as good, authentic, and rich in experience as possible. This is only possible with people like you on board.

We hope that you will share your **Tree-top** coffee experiences with your friends, family, and colleagues. That is why we have provided a promotion code for you (in the flap at the back of the book) which you can give to a coffee lover you know so that they too can enjoy a good cup of coffee.

We look forward to sending you a new coffee experience next month!

Best regards, the **Tree-top** team.

