



Ethiopia: Birthplace of Coffee

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Where does Coffee come from?

Coffee grown worldwide can trace its heritage back centuries to the ancient coffee forests on the Ethiopian plateau. Arabica coffee, or *jasminum arabicum laurifolia*, has always grown wild in the forests of the south-western highlands of the Kaffa and Buno districts.

How was it discovered?

Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee. In the tenth century, Ethiopian nomadic mountain people may have been the first to recognize coffee's stimulating effect, although they ate the red cherries directly and did not drink it as a beverage. The mystic Sufi pilgrims of Islam spread coffee throughout the Middle East. From the Middle East these beans spread to Europe and then throughout their colonial empire including Indonesia and the Americas.

Why is it important?

- Around 60% of foreign income comes from coffee, with an estimated 15 million of the population relying on some aspect of coffee production for their livelihood
- Farmers' organizations have existed in Ethiopia throughout different historical periods. The cooperative system provides their small-scale farmer members with services that include coffee processing, credit, human and financial resources for rural development.
- Most Ethiopia coffees are grown without use of agricultural chemicals in the most benign of conditions: under shade and interplanted with other crops. The only exceptions are a handful of wet-processed coffees produced by large, government-run estates in southwestern Ethiopia that make discreet use of chemicals.



Data Sources:

- <http://www.coffeereview.com/coffee-reference/coffee-categories/geographic-origins/coffees-from-africa-and-arabia/ethiopia/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffee_production_in_Ethiopia
- <http://staging.equalexchange.coop/history-of-coffee-in-ethiopia>

