

Coffee – A Primer



An Adventure in Coffee and Tea

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Note: “Coffee – A Primer” is an extract from the ebook The Coffee Culture. This primer contains the first 3 chapters from the original book which has the whole 12 chapters.

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The Coffee Culture

Introduction

coffee [kaw-fee] ~ a drink consisting of an infusion of the roasted and ground or crushed seeds of the coffee tree.

Coffee has been enjoyed by humans for more than 1,000 years. Throughout history coffee has been touted as a medicinal cure-all, and condemned as the devil's brew. Coffee is steeped in rich history, legends, romance and mystery.

Coffee beans were a prize possession of the Egyptians and were so valuable that they were used as currency. Prior to 1000 A.D., coffee berries were eaten, not brewed. It was at this time that Arab traders brought coffee to their homeland and cultivated the plant for the first time. They boiled the beans and created a drink called *Gahwa*, which means "to prevent sleep".

According to historians, Americans have been obsessed with coffee since the Boston Tea Party took place in 1773. This event made drinking coffee a patriotic duty in America. The second boom to the American coffee consumption came during Prohibition in 1920. Coffee sales have steadily risen ever since.

In recent years, coffee houses, coffee shops and coffee bars have sprouted up all across America. A recent study revealed that Americans are spending as much as \$1,500 per year purchasing coffee drinks at national coffee chains. That's a lot of beans, wouldn't you agree?

Today, coffee is the world's most popular beverage, with more than 400 billion cups consumed each year. It is a world commodity that is second only to crude oil. So why are we so obsessed with coffee? What makes this brew so enticing that people all over the world consume it?

This guide will provide you with the history of coffee, along with traditions and ceremonies associated with coffee. You'll learn about the different types of coffee and brewing methods; discover how coffee makers work and which brands are best. You'll be introduced to coffee accessories and presented with coffee gift ideas. You'll even learn about coffee games that you can play while on your coffee break!

So, go grab a cup of your favorite brew, then sit back and relax as you begin your journey into *The Coffee Culture*.

Chapter One

The History of Coffee

There are many stories and legends that surround the origins of coffee. Some are filled with mystery and romance, while others involve murder, espionage and smuggling. One of the most widely circulated legends involves a goat herder named Kaldi, from Kaffa Ethiopia.

According to this legend, one day Kaldi noticed his goats were behaving in an unusual manner after eating red berries from a hillside shrub. They were frolicking wildly and even the older and weaker goats seemed to have an abundance of youthful energy. Kaldi, feeling exhausted from herding the goats all day, decided to eat some of the red berries himself. Almost instantly after eating the berries, Kaldi experienced a surge of energy and mental clarity.

When Kaldi's wife saw how much energy her normally exhausted husband had, she encouraged him to share his miraculous discovery with the chief monk at the monastery. When Kaldi visited the monk, he was severely scolded for "partaking of the devil's fruit."

The monk tossed the berries into a fire to banish the "evil" fruit from the monastery. As the berries began to roast in the fire, the room filled with a delicious aroma. Soon, all of the other monks arrived to discover the source of this enticing smell.

The chief monk retrieved the berries from the flames and placed them in water to cool them off. He then instructed the other monks to sip the elixir. As they drank it, they experienced the energy and mental clarity that Kaldi had attempted to explain to the chief monk. From that point forward, monks indulged in this miracle elixir and used it to keep themselves awake during their evening prayers.

Another legend claims that an Arabian named Omar was exiled from Mocha, along with his followers, and banished to a desert cave to die of starvation. Omar came upon an unknown plant with bright red berries. The berries were bitter, so he instructed his followers to roast them in an attempt to improve their flavor.

The roasting process made the berries hard, so he instructed his followers to boil them in water in an attempt to soften them. After boiling the beans, only a broth remained. Omar and his followers were so hungry that they drank the broth, which immediately provided them with energy and sustained them for several days. The broth from the fruit allowed Omar and his followers to survive their exile.

When the residents in the nearby town of Mocha discovered that Omar and his followers had survived; they believed their survival was a miraculous religious event. The residents began visiting Omar in the cave to seek medical advice and to drink the broth in an attempt to be cured.

Eventually, Omar's "miracle broth" cured so many people that Omar was allowed to return to Mocha and was eventually made a saint. To honor the event, the townspeople named the plant and the beverage Mocha.

The stories of how coffee spread around the world vary greatly. There is a considerable amount of confusion in tracing the origin of coffee and its uses because of the variety of words used to refer to it in early times.

Some of the earliest references to coffee are from the Arabian words of *bunn* and *bunchum*. The first planting and actual cultivation apparently took place in Arabia. However, most will agree the coffee tree originated in the province of Kaffa, Ethiopia around 500 A.D. Since the coffee tree grows wild in Ethiopia, some experts believe the Ethiopians brought seeds to Arabia during their occupation of Yemen in the early sixth century.

Coffee was a prized possession of the Arabs and they went to great lengths to protect this valuable asset. The Arabs monopolized coffee beans and prohibited their exportation. They would strip the outer layers of the coffee bean to make them infertile. This method worked quite well for over 300 years.

In 1453, the Ottoman Turks introduced coffee to Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. In 1475, the world's first coffee shop, *Kiva Han*, opened for business. The same year, Ottoman Turks enacted a law making it legal for a woman to divorce her husband if he did not provide her with a daily quota of coffee.

In 1607, Captain John Smith, founded the Jamestown colony in Virginia. It is said that John Smith introduced coffee to North America; however, many historians disagree with this theory. We know for a fact coffee hadn't caught on in England in the early 1600s, so it's questionable as to whether Captain Smith brought coffee to the colonies.

By the mid-1600s, coffee was the drink of choice for the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam. The British took over the settlement and renamed it to New York in 1664. Coffee continued to be popular, but the British settlers still favored tea. At this time, coffee was very expensive and cost about 12 cents per cup. While that may sound extremely affordable by today's cost of living; at that time 12 cents would buy an entire meal.

By 1668, coffee had become the favorite breakfast drink of New York. While you might be thinking that it replaced tea, you'd be wrong. It replaced beer.

In 1670, Dorothy Jones of Boston, Massachusetts was granted a license to sell coffee, and so became the first American coffee trader. A few years later, the first American coffee house opened in St. Mary's City, Maryland.

When the Boston Tea Party took place in 1773, it became the patriotic duty of Americans to drink coffee. In fact, The Boston Tea Party was planned in a coffee house, the *Green Dragon*.

American pioneers traveling west always carried coffee in their covered wagons. They would brew the beans over campfires every morning and evening. In fact, from the 1800s on, nearly everyone in America was drinking coffee.

In 1820, a group of individuals called "Temperance advocates," decided to take on coffee. They held rallies and spoke out against coffee in public. They wrote articles warning of its "dangerous effects," and posted flyers claiming that coffee was toxic. Temperance advocates were so against coffee that they even wanted the government to ban it.

The Temperance advocates efforts were starting to pay off and coffee sales began to plummet. Then the advocates made a huge mistake. They claimed that coffee was a sexual stimulant and practically overnight coffee sales skyrocketed. The anti-coffee campaign fell apart and we've been drinking the stimulating brew ever since.

The following is timeline showing how coffee has circulated around the globe. This coffee timeline is provided as a Courtesy of UTNE READER, Nov/Dec 94, by Mark Schapiro, "Muddy Waters" (<http://www.utne.com/>).

Coffee Timeline

Prior to 1000 A.D.: Members of an Ethiopian tribe notice that they get an energy boost by eating a certain berry mixed with animal fat.

1000 A.D.: Arab traders import coffee back to their homeland and cultivate the plant on plantations. They also begin to boil the beans, creating a drink they call *qahwa*, which literally means, "that which prevents sleep".

1475: Turkish law makes it legal for a woman to divorce her husband if he fails to provide her with her daily quota of coffee (which is probably one of the reasons why coffee is so popular among the ladies today).

1600: Coffee is introduced to the West by Italian traders.

1607: Captain John Smith helps introduce coffee to North America.

1645: The first coffeehouse opens in Italy.

1668: New York City abandons beer as its official morning drink, replacing it instead with coffee. Unfortunately, the Irish never got the memo.

1672: Paris opens its first coffeehouse.

1690: The Dutch become the first to transport and cultivate coffee commercially.

1727: The Brazilian coffee industry gets its start when Lieutenant Colonel Francisco de Melo Palheta is sent by the Portuguese government to arbitrate a border dispute between the French and the Dutch.

1773: According to The Boston Tea Party, drinking coffee becomes a patriotic duty.

1886: Former wholesale grocer Joel Cheek names his popular coffee blend "Maxwell House," after the hotel in Nashville, TN where it is exclusively served.

1901: The first soluble "instant" coffee is invented by a Japanese-American chemist.

1903: Dr. Ludwig Roselius turns a batch of ruined coffee beans over to researchers, who perfect the process of removing caffeine from the beans without destroying their flavor. He markets it under the brand name "Sanka." Sanka is introduced to the United States in 1923.

1920: Coffee sales boom when Prohibition goes into effect in the United States.

1946: In Italy, the espresso machine is perfected and *cappuccino* is named after its color's resemblance to the robes of the monks of the Capuchin order.

1971: Starbucks opens for business in Seattle's Pike Place Market.

One thing is for certain -- coffee is here to stay. Considering it is the world's second largest commodity, the economics of coffee are astounding. Annual global coffee retail sales are estimated to be \$70 billion. This doesn't include the amount of money spent on coffee accessories, brewing machines, and coffee beans purchased for home use. As you can see, coffee really does make the world go 'round.

Coffee provides an income to more than 25 million small coffee producers around the world. In Brazil alone, over 5 million people are employed in the coffee industry. Brazil produces nearly one-third of all of the world's coffee, where over three billion plants are cultivated and harvested each year.

Coffee is bought and sold as a commodity on the New York Stock Exchange. Ironically enough, both the New York Stock Exchange and the Bank of New York started in coffeehouses, in what is today the financial district known as Wall Street.

There are over twenty five major varieties of coffee, but only two account for the majority of world production. Nearly 70 percent of coffee production is derived from *Coffea Arabica*. The remaining 30 percent comes from *Coffea canephora*, a heartier robust bean.

Let's take a look at the various varieties and where they come from...

Chapter Two Coffee Varietals

Coffee varietals refer to the biological characterization of a coffee variety. Varietals have distinct characteristics based on the environment in which they are grown. These include flavor, caffeine content, body or "mouth-feel," and acidity. Another factor that affects coffee's characteristics is the method in which the beans are processed.

Coffee beans grow on trees and are actually not beans at all, but the seeds of cherries. This prized possession only thrives in mountainous, subtropical microclimates. The terrain is sheltered and hidden in far away places with steeply sloping terrain. Workers who tend to the crops are always at risk.

Most coffee trees are grown in the subtropical climate between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. Coffee plantations are generally located in altitudes up to 9000 feet above sea level. The labor involved is intensive and includes making certain that everything about the growing environment is in balance. Workers must eliminate weeds and creepers; along with tending to the canopy of trees planted to shade the coffee trees.

Once the red cherries ripen they are harvested by hand. It takes approximately 4000 beans for one pound of coffee, which means that 2000 cherries have to be picked, as one cherry contains two beans. One coffee tree produces about two pounds of roasted coffee per season.

More than fifty countries grow and export coffee. These include Mexico, India, Ethiopia, Kenya, Guatemala, Tanzania, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Columbia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Hawaii, and the Dominican Republic.

As mentioned earlier, nearly 70 percent of coffee production is derived from the species *Coffea Arabica* and 30 percent is derived from *Coffea canephora*.

Coffea Arabica beans have a rich flavor, whereas *Coffea robusta* beans are generally used as filler in lower grade coffee blends. *Robusta* has about twice the amount of caffeine as *Arabica*, and is used in espresso blends to promote the formation of "crema".

Coffea Arabica has many different varietals, each with its own unique characteristics. Some of the more well-known *Arabica* coffees include:

BRAZIL:

Brazil is the world's largest coffee producer and cultivates everything from the world's cheapest coffee to the world's most elegant and expensive coffees. Brazil uses four different processing methods and cultivates coffee at much lower elevations than any other coffee producing country. The lower elevation yields a rounder, sweeter, less acidic bean.

The most common Brazil coffees sold in specialty shops are called "Santos 2." *Santos* beans are dry-processed, meaning the coffee has been dried inside the fruit. *Santos* coffee frequently comes from a variety of *Arabica* called *Bourbon*. If the coffee comes exclusively from trees of the Bourbon variety, they are described as *Bourbon Santos*.

COLOMBIA:

Nearly everyone is familiar with Juan Valdez, the Colombian farmer who appears with his donkey in coffee commercials. Colombian coffee is also known as *Washed Arabica*. Unlike other beans, Colombian coffee is washed to release impurities and acid agents.

Central Colombia is trisected from north to south by three mountain ranges called cordilleras. The primary coffees of the central cordillera include *Medellin*, *Armenia*, and *Manizales*.

Medellin is the most famous of the three coffees and is known for its heavy body and rich flavor. *Manizales* and *Armenia* tend to be thinner in body and less acidic.

Colombia's eastern cordillera coffees include *Bogota* and *Bucaramanga*. *Bucaramanga* coffee is rich and heavy-bodied, while *Bogota* coffee is considered one of the finest coffees grown. It is rich and flavorful like *Medellin*, but considerably less acidic.

COSTA RICA:

Costa Rica has been exporting coffee for more than 150 years. Coffee is cultivated in seven regions located throughout the central and southeastern portions of the country. Costa Rica coffees that reach America are usually the high-grown *Strictly Hard Bean* varieties.

Overall, Costa Rica coffees are distinct, clean and balanced with smooth acidity and good aroma. Each region produces its own distinct flavor:

- ❖ *Brunca* - normal body, medium acidity, and good aroma. Grown at altitudes between 2630 and 3950 feet.
- ❖ *Central Valley* - smooth body with undertones of chocolate, high acidity, and strong aroma. Grown at altitudes between 3950 and 5260 feet.
- ❖ *Tarrazú* - medium body, high acidity, and very good aroma. Grown at altitudes between 3950 and 5590 feet.
- ❖ *Tres Rios* - medium body, medium acidity, and very good aroma. Perfectly balanced. Grown at altitudes of 3950 to 5430 feet.
- ❖ *Turrialba* - mild body, normal acidity, and good aroma. Grown at altitudes between 1970 and 2960 feet.
- ❖ *West Valley* - very good body with undertones of peach and apricot, high acidity, and very good aroma. Grown at altitudes between 3280 and 3950 feet.
- ❖ *Orosi* - medium body, medium acidity, and good aroma. Grown at altitudes between 2960 and 3950 feet.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:

While the majority of countries that produce coffee do so for profit; the Dominican Republic grows coffee to stay within its borders, where it is savored as a health tonic.

Coffee is grown on both slopes of the mountain range and divided into four markets: *Cibao*, *Bani*, *Ocoa*, and *Barahona*.

- ❖ *Cibao* is the market name for a good, low-acid coffee.
- ❖ *Bani* is a soft-bodied coffee with a mellow flavor.
- ❖ *Ocoa* is highly respected and touts a mild, yet rich flavor.
- ❖ *Barahona* is considered to be the best coffee. It is heavy-bodied and more acidic than the other three.

EL SALVADOR:

In the 1970s, El Salvador was the third largest coffee importer in the world and the first in productivity. Political strife, civil war, and a devastating earthquake nearly destroyed El Salvador's position in the coffee industry. However, in recent years El Salvador has once again become a contender in the coffee game.

El Salvador only produces the *Arabica* species. The main varieties include *Bourbon* and *Pacas*. *Bourbon* accounts for 80 percent of the coffee grown in El Salvador. *Pacas* accounts for 15 percent and the rest include *Pacamara*, *Caturra*, *Catuai*, and *Catisic*.

Most El Salvador coffees are soft body with low acidity. The best grade of El Salvador coffee is *Strictly High Grown*, which means it has been produced between 4,000 and 6,000 feet above sea level.

ETHIOPIA:

Coffee is Ethiopia's most important cash crop and largest export commodity. An estimated 200,000 to 250,000 tons of coffee is produced in Ethiopia each year. There are four types of production systems used in Ethiopia: forest coffee, semi-forest coffee, garden coffee, and plantation coffee.

Ethiopia produces some of the most unique and fascinating coffees in the world. Coffee is cultivated in three main regions: *Harrar*, *Ghimbi*, and *Sidamo*.

Harrar coffees are grown on small farms in the Eastern part of the country. They are identified as longberry, shortberry, or Mocha. *Harrar* coffees are heavy-bodied with a rich aroma and fruit undertones. *Harrar* coffee is frequently used in espresso blends.

Ghimbi has the fruit undertones of *Harrar*, but can be richer, more balanced, and have a heavier body or mouth feel.

Sidamo is grown in Southern Ethiopia and is also known as *Ethiopian Fancies* or *Ethiopian Estate Grown*. The most famous of these coffees is *Yirgacheffe*, which has an unparalleled fruity aroma, light and elegant body, and an almost menthol taste.

GUATEMALA:

Guatemala is known for producing some of the world's finest and most distinctive coffees. *Guatemala Antigua* is one of the most distinguished Guatemalan coffees. Cultivated in the mountain basin of the colonial city Guatemala Antigua, this coffee is a unique blend of smoke, spice, flowers, and occasionally chocolate.

Guatemala coffees grown outside of the Antigua basin are generally softer-body, but equally unique in flavor to *Guatemala Antigua*. These include coffees grown in the regions of Cobán, Huehuetenango, San Marcos and Lake Atitlan.

The highest grade of Guatemala coffee is *Strictly Hard Bean* (SHB). SHB coffee is grown under the supervision of ANACAFE, the Guatemalan coffee association. Most Guatemala coffee is grown in the shade on organized coffee cooperatives.

HAITI:

In the 1990s, the United States led an embargo against the dictatorship in Haiti. Unfortunately, the coffee growers became so desperate for money that they burned their coffee trees to produce charcoal, which could be sold in local markets.

In 1995, the Federation of Native Coffee Associations (FACN) and USAID, developed a specialty coffee and trademarked it as *Haitian Bleu*. Today *Haitian Bleu* is cultivated by nearly 7,000 farmers who belong to the Cafeieres Natives cooperative. *Haitian Bleu* is a rich, full-bodied coffee with dry, sweet tones.

HAWAII:

The most traditional Hawaiian coffee is known as Kona coffee. Kona is a growing district located on the southwest side of the Big Island. Kona coffee originates from a local strain of typica called *Guatemala*.

Kona coffee is cultivated on clusters of tiny farms located on the lower slopes of Mount Hualalai and Mauna Loa. Kona coffee is grown at altitudes of 800 to 2500 feet, which generally results in a low-acidic coffee. Due to the volcanic ash in the area, Kona coffee has acidic levels of coffee grown at a much higher altitude. However, it is a gentle acidity and frequently presents with fruit undertones.

There are five primary grades of Kona coffee: Extra Fancy, Fancy, Number 1, Peaberry, and Prime. The Extra Fancy bean is the largest and has the fewest defects. It's followed by Fancy, Number 1, and Prime.

Peaberry is an extremely rare and unique coffee bean. Whereas most coffee cherries produce two coffee beans, which are flat on one side and curved on the other, the Peaberry bean is rounded and oblong and only one is found in each coffee cherry.

Kona is not the only island that cultivates coffee in Hawaii. Other islands that cultivate coffee include Kauai and Molokai.

Kauai produces a highly selected coffee called *Kauai Estate Reserve*. This coffee is full-bodied, sweet and low-acidic.

Molokai produces a highly selected coffee called *Malulani Estate*. This coffee is medium-bodied with herbal notes and low-acidic.

HONDURAS:

Honduras coffee plantations suffered devastating losses in the 1990s, including hurricane Mitch in 1998 and the floods and storms of 1999. Additionally, most of the coffee grown in Honduras is produced by small coffee plantation owners who do not have the workforce to harvest the fruit in a timely fashion.

In recent years, Honduras has begun a reorganization effort in an attempt to revive coffee production. Currently coffees from the Marcala region near the El Salvador border have the best reputation of Honduras origins. These coffees have a medium-body and are more acidic. The highest grade of Honduras coffee is *Strictly High Grown*. To meet the criteria, coffee must be grown at an altitude of 4900 to 6400 feet above sea level. When buying Honduran coffee, look for one that states, "*Strictly High Grown, European Quality*".

INDIA:

India is the only country that grows all of its coffee under shade. This produces a mild, yet full-bodied taste and an exotic aroma. India coffee is rooted in spirituality and coffee growers are exceptionally passionate about their crops.

India coffee crops are some of the most well tended crops in the world. Because the coffee is shade-grown, up to 50 different types of shade trees are found in coffee plantations. A variety of spices and fruit crops are also grown on coffee plantations and include cardamom, vanilla, and pepper, orange and banana.

India also produces the *Robusta* variety known as *Kaapi Royale*. India has consistently produced and exported some of the finest coffees in the world for more than 150 years.

JAMAICA:

One of the world's most expensive coffees comes from the central Blue Mountains of Jamaica. The environment in which *Jamaica Blue Mountain* coffee grows is the most unique of all. Although the elevations are considered modest for coffee cultivation (3,000 to 4,000), the Blue

Mountains are almost constantly enveloped in fog. The fog slows the development of the bean, allowing it to become denser and yield what many call the perfect coffee bean.

Jamaican Blue Mountain coffees are known for their mild flavor and lack of bitterness. In order for coffee to be labeled as *Jamaican Blue Mountain*, growers must adhere to strict guidelines and receive certification from the Coffee Industry Board of Jamaica.

KENYA:

Most coffee from Kenya is produced on small farms in the high plateau regions. Kenya's environment provides a near-perfect climate for coffee growing; allowing beans to ferment longer and resulting in intensely flavorful beans.

The major coffee growing regions in Kenya are the High Plateaus around Mt. Kenya, the Aberdare Range, Kasii, Nyanza, Bungoma, Nakuru and Kericho.

Coffee from Kenya is well known for its intense flavor, full body, and pleasant aroma. It is often said that Kenya coffees are like fine wines. Great Kenyan coffees possess a unique, striking fruitiness. It's common to taste notes of raspberry, blackberry, lemon or black currant.

MEXICO:

Most Mexico coffee is cultivated in the south-central and southeastern regions of the country. The majority of Mexican coffee is processed using the wet method, which ensures better acidity and body. Coffee is graded based on the altitude where it is grown. Most Mexican coffees are delicate in body, with a slightly dry, acidic aftertaste.

Vera Cruz, located on the gulf side of the central mountain range, produces mostly lowland coffees. *Altura* coffee, meaning "high-grown," is cultivated in Chiapas and Oaxaca. Where coffee is concerned, the higher altitude almost always means higher quality.

Vera Cruz and Chiapas produce 60 to 70 percent of the Mexican coffee crop. The remainder is grown in Puebla, Oaxaca and surrounding states. When selecting Mexican coffees look for *Altura Coatepec*, *Altura Huatusco*, *Oaxaca*, *Oaxaca Pluma*, *Chiapas*, and *Tapachula*.

It's important to note that coffee from Mexican estates rarely can be found in the United States. Mexican estate coffee is sold almost exclusively into Europe, particularly Germany.

NICARAGUA:

Nicaragua has been ravished by civil war and Mother Nature. Hurricane Mitch brought tremendous devastation to Nicaragua coffee plantations in 1998. The drought of 2001, forced many coffee plantation workers into unemployment and left Nicaragua's economy in near ruin.

Most Americans are not familiar with Nicaragua coffee because it was not allowed to be imported into the United States during the cold war. Most Nicaragua coffee is shade grown on various estates and cooperatives.

The Jinotega, Matagalpa, and Segovia regions produce the best-known Nicaragua coffees. These coffees are complex and highly fragrant, with a medium-body and moderate acidity. Coffees grown in the Matagalpa region are known for their nutty vanilla flavor. Coffees grown in the Jinotega and Segovia regions offer a heavier mouth feel and bolder acidity.

The highest grade of Nicaragua coffee is *Strictly High Grown*. When purchasing Nicaragua *Strictly High Grown* coffee, look for coffees from the Selva Negra estate or the Prodocoop cooperative mill in the Segovia region.

PANAMA:

Panama is becoming a heavy hitter in the coffee industry and brings unique and interesting varieties to the table. Panama coffees tend to have complex and distinct characteristics. Panama coffees are generally shade-grown and offer a rich, bold flavor with high acidity.

The best Panama coffee is grown on highland estates in the Boquete region, just south of the border with Costa Rica. Five Boquete coffees scored in the top ten at the 2003 Specialty Coffee Association of America Boston cupping competition. In April 2004, Panama's "*Esmeralda Special*," placed first in the "Best of Panama" cupping competition.

PERU:

In the early 1990s, Peru was emerging from a period of economic and political instability that had nearly eradicated their coffee industry. In attempt to help Peruvian coffee farmers recover, Kraft Foods initiated a co-op coffee program.

In 2004, Kraft Foods launched the *Verano* brand, a 100-percent organic Peruvian coffee, in Austria. Today, they are the world's largest importer of coffee from Peru.

One of the chief coffee growing regions in Peru is located in the Chanchamayo Valley, located about 200 miles east of Lima. This region produces about 40 percent of Peru's total coffee crop. This region's coffee has the best reputation of Peru coffees and is generally light-bodied, but flavorful and aromatic.

Coffee is also cultivated in the northern part of the country and on the eastern and western slopes of the Andes Mountains. The finest Peru coffees come from this region and produce a light-bodied coffee with notes of vanilla and nut.

VENEZUELA:

Venezuela coffee is grown in the mountainous regions of the Andes Cordillera and the Coastal Cordillera. It has a smooth rich flavor and is considered to be among the best coffees in the world.

Venezuela produces less than one percent of the world's coffee and very little of that amount is exported. The most sought-after Venezuela coffee is cultivated in the far western corner of the country, near the Colombia border. Coffees grown in this region are referred to as "Maracaibos" and include *Cúcuta*, *Mérida*, *Trujillo*, and *Táchira*.

As we discussed earlier in this chapter, more than fifty countries grow and export coffee. To discuss the origins and varieties of every coffee available, would require an entire book. In this chapter, we have only briefly touched upon the wonderful world of coffee beans. I encourage you to conduct further research on-line or visit your local library and check-out books on the subject.

One thing is for certain, as you begin to understand more about the coffee culture, it will certainly make you more appreciative of each precious sip!

Chapter Three

To Brew, or Not to Brew

If you brew your coffee at home, chances are good that you use a coffee maker. Today, we have a wide variety of coffee machines and are able to brew everything from regular to espresso coffee, along with lattes and cappuccinos. But, coffee brewing hasn't always been as easy as pressing a button.

The earliest coffee brewing methods involved boiling the coffee and water together. Filtering of the grounds was an option. As you can imagine, this made for an overly bitter and rather disgusting brew.

Around 1710, the *Infusion* brewing process was introduced in France. *Infusion* called for enclosing the coffee grounds in a linen bag, called a 'biggin'. The biggin was filled with coffee, closed with a drawstring and submersed into hot water within the pot. The grounds were allowed to steep or "infuse" until the desired strength was achieved. During this time the coffee pot consisted of a metal container which had a spout or spigot.

Coffee makers continued to evolve throughout the 18th century. New methods for separating the grounds were developed, and elaborate urns were developed. It was during this period that inner chambers and outer jackets were invented. These innovations allowed coffee to be kept warm for extended periods of time.

It was also around this time that the *French Drip Pot* was developed in Europe. In this method of brewing coffee, two chambers are stacked one upon the other, with a cloth filter placed in between. Ground coffee was packed into the upper chamber and boiling water was poured over it. As the coffee brewed, it slowly dripped into the lower chamber. This brewing process took a considerable amount of time and led to a weak cup.

The 19th century brought the invention of the espresso machine and the glass vacuum pot. The earliest glass vacuum pots appear to have been in use in Germany around 1830. One of the first glass vacuum pot patents was filed in France by Madame Jeanne Richard in 1838. Here's a little known fact that you probably aren't aware of...the madams of brothels were instrumental in the invention of coffee brewers. They served a lot of coffee and had time to discuss their thoughts on what would make the perfect brewing machine. In fact, during this period, women received as many coffee brewing patents as men.

Around the same time the glass vacuum pot was invented, a similar coffee brewing machine was also invented. This was the percolator coffee pot. While the glass vacuum pot heated the entire bowl of water and forced it up to a top bowl; the percolator heated only the water at the bottom of the pot. The percolator coffee pot is still in use today.

The 20th century brought a revolution in commercial coffee makers. In 1915, Corning Glass Work's introduced a coffee maker made from *Pyrex*. This ovenproof glass was marketed under the name "Silex."

The rights to the design had been acquired in 1909 by two sisters, Mrs. Ann Bridges and Mrs. Sutton, of Salem, Massachusetts. The two sisters sold a large number of their *Silex* brewers to hotels and sandwich shops, making their name synonymous with commercial coffee makers.

During the 1930s, coffee makers were further revolutionized with the addition of electricity. One of the first electric coffee machines was made by Willy Brandl. The most innovative invention of the electric coffee maker was the switch that turned it off at the right time. A little mercury float switch was mounted into the center top piece, which turned off the heat when the water level got too low.

In 1933, Dr. Ernest Illy invented the first automatic espresso coffee machine. The espresso coffee makers that are in use today were created by Italian Achilles Gaggia in 1946.

The next innovation in coffee makers came in 1942, when Harvey Cory designed his "rubberless" vacuum pot. Prior to his invention, coffee makers used a rubber gasket to form an airtight seal between the upper and lower containers. Cory's design substituted the rubber gasket with a seal formed by two mechanically ground glass surfaces.

Throughout the 1940s, coffee makers evolved by leaps and bounds. Sunbeam introduced their line of "Coffeemaster" machines with slick polished chrome finish and electric vacuum brewers with automatic shut-off devices. General Electric introduced their "Automatic" model, which incorporated a unique, magnetically-activated device to control the brewing process.

The most major advancement in coffee machines came in the 1960s when the modern filter type coffee maker was developed. Perhaps one of the most well known coffee maker brands is Mr. Coffee. Mr. Coffee invented the automatic drip process in 1972 and later signed Joe DiMaggio as the spokesperson for their company. With Mr. DiMaggio's endorsement, Mr. Coffee quickly became the best-selling coffeemakers in the United States.

Today, there are dozens of coffee maker choices. You can find espresso machines, drip coffee makers, percolators, French Drip, cappuccino makers, single cup coffee makers, and pod coffee makers. How on earth do you decide which one is best for you?

It's easy! In the next chapter, we'll review coffee makers to help you decide which brewing method will provide you with your preferred brew.

As I mentioned at the start of this book, this Primer was taken from a much complete book called “The Coffee Culture”. Listed below are the complete chapters of that book.

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The “The Coffee Culture” book also includes a 2-hour MP3 audio version. You can get it at [The Coffee Culture](#).