C o f f e e

Origins in the Ethiopian forests

global phenomenon

Encouragement, Culture, and Science in Every Cup

From its beginnings in the forests of Ethiopia to global coffeehouses and scientific laboratories, coffee has an incredibly rich history and significance. Although it is often considered a simple beverage, coffee possesses deep social, cultural, and even scientific aspects.

History and Culture

Legend has it that coffee was discovered in Ethiopia when a shepherd named Kaldi noticed that his goats became more energetic after eating the fruits of the coffee plant. This discovery laid the foundation for the coffee culture that quickly spread to the Arab world. By the 15th century, coffee had become a popular beverage in Arabian cafés, where it was a subject of discussion, trade, and social gatherings.

Gradually, coffee reached Europe and later other parts of the world, becoming an integral part of everyday life. Each culture developed its own rituals associated with coffee drinking – from Italian espresso to Turkish coffee.

Science and Health

Beyond its social role, coffee also has fascinating scientific aspects. It contains the stimulant caffeine, which increases alertness and concentration. However, recent research has shown that coffee also contains many other bioactive compounds, such as antioxidants and polyphenols, which have potential health benefits.

Studies suggest that regular coffee consumption may reduce the risk of certain diseases, including Parkinson's disease, type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancer. Nonetheless, it's important to remember that coffee's effects can vary depending on the individual and their consumption habits.

Coffee in Modern Society

Today, coffee has become a global phenomenon that connects people across cultures and continents. Cafés have evolved into spaces not only for drinking coffee but also for meeting, working, and relaxing. The rise of specialty coffee shops and the growing demand for high-quality coffee have led to new trends in preparation and presentation, such as hand-brewed pour-over methods and latte art.

At the same time, coffee has become an important part of the economy in many countries, especially those in tropical regions where coffee plants are cultivated. Sustainability and fair trade are becoming increasingly important topics in the coffee industry.

Coffee is not merely a beverage; it is a phenomenon that reflects the complex relationship between history, culture, science, and society. From its humble beginnings in the African forests to a global phenomenon, coffee has an unmistakable influence on human culture and economy.

Production

Coffee is one of the most popular beverages in the world. Its production is a complex process that includes several stages, from growing coffee trees to preparing the beverage.

Cultivation of Coffee Plants – The Quality of the Raw Material Is Essential.

Climatic Conditions

Coffee plants require specific climatic conditions. Ideal regions are those with warm climates, sufficient rainfall, and mild temperature fluctuations. The best conditions are found in the area between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, known as the "coffee belt." Major producers include Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, Vietnam, and Honduras.

Types of Coffee Plants

Coffee is cultivated in various species and varieties, each with distinct flavor profiles, aromas, and characteristics. Below are the main types of coffee and their features:

Coffea Arabica

- *Flavor: Delicate, sweet, often with fruity and floral notes*
- *Acidity: Higher acidity, often considered pleasant*
- *Body: Light to medium*

- *Altitude: Prefers higher elevations (600–2000 m)*
- *Producers: Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, Honduras*

Coffea Canephora (Robusta)

- *Flavor: Strong, bitter, often with chocolate and earthy tones*
- *Acidity: Lower acidity, intense flavor*
- *Body: Full and dense*

- *Altitude: Grows at lower elevations (0–600 m)*
- *Producers: Vietnam, Brazil, Indonesia, Uganda*

Liberica

- *Flavor: Exotic, sometimes with fruity and woody notes*
- *Acidity: Lower, but distinct*
- *Body: Full, often coarse*

- *Altitude: Found in West and Central Africa and parts of Asia*
- *Producers: Liberia, the Philippines, Indonesia*

Excelsa

- *Flavor: Sweet, fruity, with acidic and spicy notes*
- *Acidity: Medium to high*
- *Body: Medium to full*

- *Altitude: Grows in tropical regions, often blended with other varieties* • *Producers: Vietnam, the Philippines*

Each of the thousands of coffee varieties has its own characteristics that influence flavor and aroma profiles. Understanding these varieties helps coffee lovers choose the ideal option according to their preferences.

Harvesting

Manual Harvesting

Manual picking is a labor-intensive but effective method for obtaining high-quality beans. Harvesting can be selective – picking only ripe cherries – or through strip picking, where all cherries are stripped from a branch at once.

Mechanical Harvesting

In some regions, especially in Brazil, mechanical harvesters are used. These machines are faster and cheaper but may damage plants and collect unripe cherries as well.

Processing Coffee Beans

Wet method (Washed)

The wet method is more expensive and technologically demanding, but the coffee processed this way achieves higher quality. It involves fermentation and washing of the beans to remove the pulp and skin, followed by drying either in the sun or in mechanical dryers.

Dry method (Natural)

The dry method is traditional, simpler, and the most environmentally friendly. Whole cherries are dried in the sun, and then the pulp and skin are mechanically removed. This method is common in areas with limited water access.

Honey method (Honey)

The honey method combines the wet and dry methods. Beans are dried with part of the pulp still attached, giving the resulting coffee distinctive sweet and fruity notes.

In recent years, new subcategories have emerged – yellow, red, gold, black, or white honey. These names describe how the processing method influences flavor and the overall profile of the coffee. The key factor is how much pulp remains on the bean after processing.

Roasting

Roasting is a key step that significantly affects the final taste of coffee. Green coffee beans are roasted at temperatures between 180°C and 250°C. There are different levels of roasting, from light to dark, which influence the flavor, aroma, and body of the coffee.

Light Roast

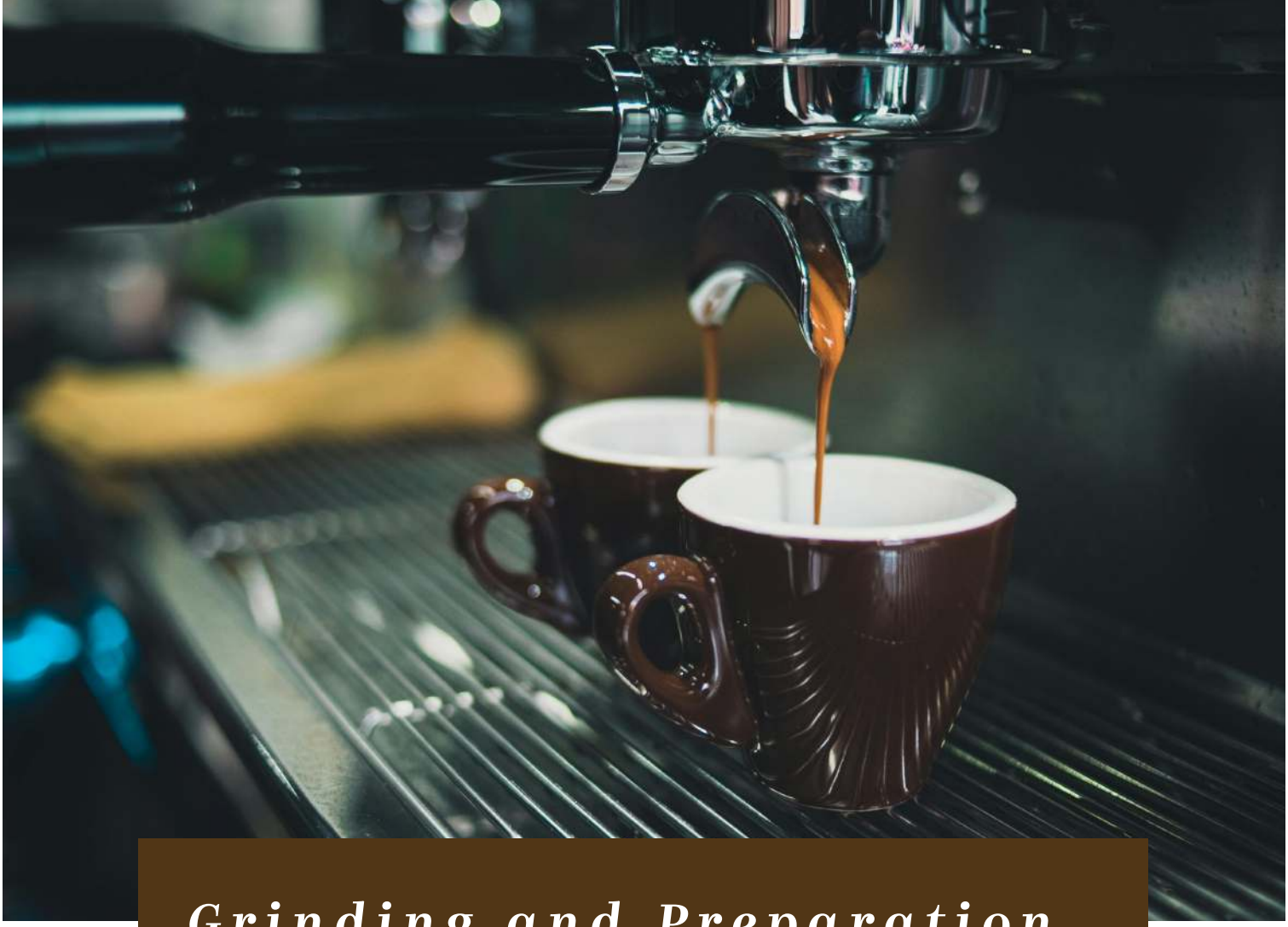
Preserves most of the bean's original flavors, often with bright acidity and a light body.

Medium Roast

A balance between preserving origin flavors and developing caramelized tones; balanced taste and medium body.

Dark Roast

Heavily alters the bean's chemical structure, creating deep, smoky, and chocolate notes; full body and lower acidity.



Grinding and Preparation

Proper coffee grinding is essential for optimal flavor extraction. Grind size depends on the brewing method – from very fine for espresso to coarse for filtered coffee.

There are many brewing methods, including espresso, filtered coffee, French press, AeroPress, and moka pot. Each has specific grind requirements and extraction times, influencing the final flavor of the beverage.

Coffee production is a complex process involving many steps – from growing coffee plants to preparing the drink. Each stage has a significant impact on the final quality and flavor. Understanding these steps helps consumers appreciate the effort behind each cup of their favorite beverage and choose the coffee that best suits their taste preferences.

Espresso

Espresso is a strong, concentrated form of coffee prepared by extracting hot water under high pressure (around 9 bars) through finely ground coffee. It is made using an espresso machine that maintains constant pressure and temperature. Espresso has a rich, intense aroma and strong flavor with a creamy foam on top, called crema. Due to its concentration, it forms the base for many other coffee drinks such as cappuccino, latte, or americano.

Filtred coffee

Filtered coffee is made by slowly pouring hot water through ground coffee placed in a paper or metal filter. Popular methods include automatic drip machines or manual brewers such as Hario V60, Chemex, or Kalita Wave. Filtered coffee has a clean and delicate taste that allows the drinker to recognize individual tones and nuances – ideal for tasting different coffee varieties and origins. The beverage usually has a lighter body and lower acidity than espresso.

French press

Also known as a press pot or plunger pot, the French press is a simple and effective brewing method. Coarsely ground coffee is steeped in hot water for 4–5 minutes, then separated from the grounds by pressing down a metal plunger with a filter. French press coffee has a full body and rich flavor since the metal filter does not remove oils and fine particles, resulting in a complex and intense beverage.

Aeropress

The AeroPress is a modern and versatile brewing device that combines elements of espresso, filtered coffee, and the French press. Finely to medium-ground coffee is mixed with hot water and then pushed through a paper or metal filter using air pressure. AeroPress coffee is clean and smooth, allowing experimentation with variables such as water temperature, extraction time, and grind size to achieve a wide range of flavor profiles.

Moka Pot

The moka pot, also known as a stovetop espresso maker, is a traditional Italian method for brewing coffee. Water in the lower chamber is heated, creating pressure that forces hot water through the coffee grounds into the upper chamber. Coffee from a moka pot is strong and intense, similar to espresso but brewed at lower pressure and often with more bitterness. It is popular in households for its simplicity and speed.

Cold brew

Cold brew is a method that uses cold water for a long extraction period. Coarsely ground coffee is mixed with water and steeped for 12–24 hours at room temperature or in the refrigerator. The coffee is then filtered. Cold brew has a smooth, refreshing flavor with fruity acidity and subtle sweetness. It's ideal for summer months and can be served with ice or milk.

Turkish Coffee

Turkish coffee is prepared in a small pot (cezve) with finely ground coffee and water. The mixture is slowly boiled over low heat or in hot sand and served unfiltered. It is often sweetened and sometimes flavo red with spices such as cardamom. Thanks to the fine grind and long brewing time, this style offers a robust and strong flavor with medium acidity.