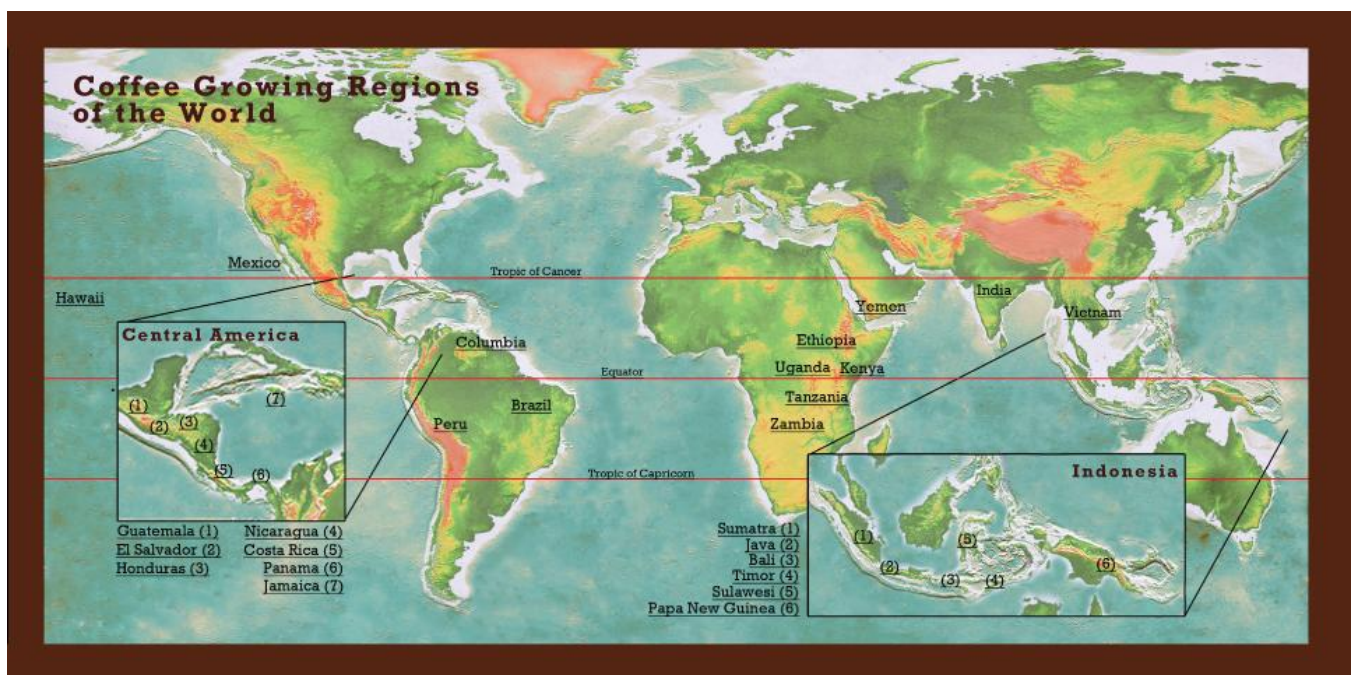


Single Origin

As the story goes, coffee was originally discovered in Ethiopia by shepherds who noticed their goats acting wildly after eating cherries from a coffee bush. The earliest credible evidence of drinking coffee as a beverage dates back to 15th century Yemen. Coffee was first cultivated in southern Arabia and has since spread to over 70 countries that now grow coffee commercially. Some of the more prevalent specialty-grade-coffee producing countries include: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, Colombia, Sumatra, Java, Papua New Guinea, Sulawesi, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.



The term “single-origin” refers to coffee grown in one specific locale. This could be a region of a country, a cooperative of farms, a processing facility or even a single farm. This is in contrast to most of the world’s coffee production, which is blended from many origins for economic reasons and becomes production-grade coffee.

Coffee flavor is influenced by many factors, including: soil type, humidity, rainfall, altitude, sun exposure, farming techniques, plant maintenance, harvesting methods, and processing methods. In addition to these factors there are many cultivars of coffee that also influence flavor. Keeping these coffees separated into single-origins allows for a diverse palate of individual tastes.



Some of these growing areas can be generalized as follows:

Costa Rica

Costa Rican coffee is often the coffee that most others are compared with, and could be considered the “coffee standard.” It is generally straightforward, clean, and mild with lots of “coffee flavor.” The only problem with Costa Rican coffee is that it can be too middle-of-the-road and lack distinction.

El Salvador

El Salvador can produce excellent coffee. The Bourbon varietal coffees exhibit a well-balanced, classic profile, while the Pacamara varietal coffees are distinctive and full of character. El Salvador offers traditional cultivars of coffee grown at high altitude.

Ethiopia

Ethiopian coffees are considered by some to be the best in the world. Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee, and it offers diverse coffee cultivars. Ethiopian wet-processed coffees offer a rich brightness, with fruity and floral notes, while the dry-processed coffees produce a more rustic, fruity flavor profile with thicker body.

Guatemala

Guatemalan coffee is considered the crown jewel of Central America by some; it has the potential of high cupping values. It can be superior to its neighboring countries. Great Guatemalan coffees have clean, fruity tastes with floral hints, moderate body, and a lasting clean aftertaste. Varying qualities within the same regions add to the complexity of Guatemalan coffee.

Honduras

Honduran coffees can range from bright, lightly fruited flavors, with strong caramel-like sweetness, to lower-acidity coffees that are fantastic in espresso. Honduras can have a problem with proper drying of coffee after it is wet-processed due to areas that are wet and humid. The areas in the south have an advantage of a drier climate, but the coffees do not have the bright acidic flavors of the Northern zones.

Hawaii

Hawaiian coffee, notably Kona coffee (grown in the Kona District of the Big Island of Hawaii) is reputed to be some of the best in the world. However, it is expensive. It is mild (some say too mild) and flavorful with an even all-around aroma, mellowness and full-bodied flavor.

Malawi

Malawi is a small country bordered by Zambia to the northwest, Tanzania to the northeast, and Mozambique on the east, south and west. Most Malawi specialty coffees are estate grown and are mellow, medium-bodied coffees that embody the softer, more floral style of East Africa coffee.

Nicaragua

The most important coffee zone of Nicaragua is the northwestern part of the central highlands, from Matagalpa to Jinotega. Nicaraguan coffees have a wide range of flavors including citrusy and bright. Most cultivars grown are Typica, Bourbon, Maragogype, Caturra and Pacas. Coffee Review described it as “sweet, balanced, rich, often full-bodied, with more emphasis on the low-toned chocolate and apricot/papaya side of the fruit sensation than on the higher-toned, floral, citrus side” (Coffee Review August 2011, “Nicaragua: Continuity and Innovation” by Kenneth Davids).

Papua New Guinea

When referring to Papua New Guinea coffee, it is often included with Indonesian coffees. However, even though it shares the island of New Guinea with Papua and New Papua (which are both part of Indonesia), it is an independent country and part of Oceania rather than Indonesia. Papua New Guinea, therefore, is worlds away from Indonesian countries such as Java and Sumatra, and from their coffees. Coffee is mostly grown in the Eastern Highland Province, the Western Highland Province, and Simbu, and it is grown mostly by small farmers with as little as 20 trees in small plots alongside subsistence crops, predominantly in isolated places. The coffee is mostly certified as organic. Much of the coffee comes from a Typica variety grown from Jamaica Blue Mountain Typica rootstock.

Peru

Coffee from Peru is generally mildly acidic and light-bodied. (Acidic in coffee-speak is a good thing: it is the acids in coffee that convey all of the bright fruity and floral flavors.) Peruvian coffees are sometimes poorly picked and processed, but the best of Peru coffees are exceptional with a vanilla-nut-toned sweetness.

Wet-processed coffee from the Chanchamayo Valley, about 200 miles east of Lima in the high Andes, has the best reputation of the Peru coffees. The Cuzco region, particularly the Urubamba Valley, also produces respected wet-processed coffee. The highest grade is AAA. Certified organic coffees from cooperatives of small farmers in Northern Peru are often excellent, and represent the socially progressive side of specialty coffee at its most admirable. (www.coffeereview.com, Coffee of the Americas: Peru.)

Sumatra

Sumatra coffees are famous for their heavy body, and rustic, earthy flavors. Much of the flavor comes from the wet-hull method of processing (a hybrid between the wet-process and the dry-process). This coffee can be full of body, with a deep, expansive flavor, and a low-toned acidity. Some coffee lovers enjoy the earthiness, while others avoid it. Most of the high-quality coffee comes from near Lake Toba (Mandheling and Lintong) or in Aceh Province (Aceh and Gayo).

Tanzania

The Tanzania coffee character shares the sharp, winy acidity typical of Africa and Arabia coffees and shows many of the same positive qualities as Kenya coffees. They tend to be medium- to full-bodied and fairly rich in flavor.

Most quality Tanzania coffees are grown on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Meru, near the Kenyan border. The Kilimanjaro region coffees tend to be reminiscent of washed Ethiopia coffees with a soft, floral flavor. Smaller amounts come from farther south, between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Nyasa.

Peaberries are often sorted out and, owing to tradition, sold in the United States as a novelty coffee. (A peaberry is from a coffee cherry that has a single rounded bean instead of the usual two flat-sided beans.)

Uganda

*Uganda is located in central Africa at the headwaters of the Nile. *Coffea Canephora* (Robusta) is indigenous to Uganda and continues to be the main coffee produced. However, Uganda also produces some excellent wet-processed Arabicas. Virtually all is grown on small village plots intercropped with traditional food crops and grown in the shade of banana trees and other shade trees.*

Some Ugandan coffee is known as Wugar, which is grown in the mountains bordering Zaire along Uganda's western border. The preferred Bugisu is from the western slopes of Mt. Elgon on the Kenya border. It is a winy, fruit-toned African coffee, similar to but slightly rougher than that of Kenya.

Yemen

Yemen is one of the original birthplaces of the coffee beverage, and was the first place to commercialize and trade coffee, through the city of Al Mahka (Mokha). Yemeni coffee is grown today, as it has been for over five hundred years, in the mountains of Yemen from ancient varieties of Arabica grown nowhere else in the world except in eastern Ethiopia. Yemen coffees are dry-processed, or natural

coffees that are dried with the fruit still attached to the beans, as they have done for centuries. Yemen coffee is acidic, complex, and fragrantly powerful.