

Profitable INVESTING Tips

Stock Market Investing Tips, Techniques, and Resources



All About Coffee

By www.BuyOrganicCoffee.org

Coffee is a beverage brewed from the seed (bean) of the *Coffea* plant. More than half of all Americans over the age of 18 drink coffee every day. Americans average 3 cups a day and spend about \$40 billion a year on their coffee.

The History of Coffee: Ethiopian Legend to Modern Genetic Testing

In Ethiopia, they tell the story of Kaldi the goat herder who saw his goats become energized by eating berries from a tree. The legend has it that Kaldi tried the same berries and experienced the same effect. He then reported this finding to the abbot of a local monastery who made a drink of the berries and thus became the first person to drink coffee.

Recorded history tells us that by the 1400's coffee was grown and traded on the Arabian Peninsula and by the 1500's people were drinking coffee in Turkey, Syria, Egypt, and Persia (Iran). By the 1600's coffee arrived in Europe where the clergy in Venice condemned the drink and asked the Pope to intervene. Pope Clement VIII tried the "bitter invention of Satan," liked it, and gave coffee the papal seal of approval.

Modern researchers have trekked the highland of East Africa in search of wild coffee. The genetic testing done on these wild varieties of coffee indicates that Arabica coffee originated in the Southeastern area of evergreen forests in the mountainous Sidarno and Harar provinces of Ethiopia.

What about the Plants That Give Us Coffee?

Scientifically, coffee is a *woody perennial evergreen dicotyledon* that belongs to the *Rubiaceae family*. You can now forget that part. What is more important to us coffee drinkers is that there are two main coffee species, *Coffea Arabica* (Arabica coffee) and *Coffea canephora* (Robusta coffee). Robusta is more hardy, more prolific, more disease-resistant, and does not taste as good. Robusta also has more caffeine.

Arabica is less prolific, less hardy, more prone to diseases like coffee leaf rust, and has less caffeine. But Arabica tastes significantly better than Robusta, so your gourmet coffee brands are almost always Arabica.

Economics: The Money Aspects of Coffee

- Worldwide coffee consumption is about 500 billion cups a year
- Most coffee is consumed in economically developed nations
- 90% of coffee is grown in developing nations
- 25 million people make their living on coffee farms
- The fastest growing niche in the restaurant business is coffee shops

- Northern Europeans rank highest for who drinks the most coffee per capita
- The USA consumes the most coffee of any nation

The Whole Process from Planting the Coffee Seed to Your Cup of Java

Yes, Coffee starts with a Seed (the coffee bean)

To grow coffee, a coffee farmer plants the beans (seeds) in moist and shaded soil. This is typically done in a nursery where the seedlings are protected from bright sunlight and watered often. When the plants are strong enough, they are planted in the field. Farmers do this in the rainy season to let the coffee plant establish its root structure before the soil dries out.

Waiting and Then Picking Coffee

When the coffee farmer plants coffee, he needs to wait for the plant to mature before he can get a coffee crop. Coffee takes three to four years to mature and produce fruit, the coffee cherry. Coffee is ready to pick when the cherry is a deep and bright red. And, when the coffee cherry is ripe, there is also a distinctive odor in the field, another indication that the time is right to bring in the coffee crop. In most coffee growing regions, there is one harvest a year. However, in some countries like Colombia, Arabica coffee has a primary and a secondary harvest each year.

Soaking and Raking the Coffee: Processing and Drying

The coffee farmer needs to process his picked coffee quickly. Otherwise, it starts to spoil. A few bad beans, called “stinkers” can ruin a batch of coffee. There are two ways to process coffee, dry and wet.

Dry Coffee Processing: Sunlight, Raking, and Time

Dry processing is pretty basic. The cherries are spread out in the sun. A worker rakes the beans frequently to turn them over and make sure that all of them are drying. And, the workers must cover the beans in case of rain and at night so that the morning dew does not moisten the coffee again. They keep doing this until the cherries are dried to 11 percent moisture content. This can take several weeks! Small coffee farms in dry areas and coffee farmers without a lot of money use this process.

Wet Coffee Processing: First You Soak the Coffee but You Still Need to Dry It!

With wet processing, the cherries are fed into a pulping machine. This separates pulp and skin from the coffee bean. Beans are separated by weight using water channels where heavy beans sink and light beans float. Then, the beans are separated by size using a series of screens or rotating drums.

For wet processing, the beans are left in fermentation tanks filled with water for up to 48 hours. This removes another layer called the parenchyma and a layer of mucilage on the parchment. Then the beans are rinsed one more time before drying.

Wet processed coffee beans can be dried by the sun to 11% moisture content as is done with dry processing. On a large commercial coffee farm, they will tumble dry the coffee in drying machines.

When the coffee beans are dry, they are still encased in a layer of parchment and are called parchment coffee.

For more insights and useful information about organic coffee, visit www.BuyOrganicCoffee.org.

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