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Is Juan Valdez a Real Guy?

By: www.BuyOrganicCoffee.org

You have probably seen him in the side of a package of coffee or on television. Juan Valdez is leading his burro who is in turn loaded with bags of coffee down out of the Andes Mountains in Colombia. When you see Juan Valdez on the label that means your coffee is 100% Colombian. So, is Juan Valdez a real guy? He has always been portrayed by a real person although not always Colombian and not necessarily someone in the business of growing or selling coffee.

History of Juan Valdez

Back in the 1950s coffee growers in Colombia wanted a way to distinguish their coffee from coffee produced elsewhere. Colombian coffee is uniformly very good Arabica coffee and commands a premium on the market. An American advertiser, William Bernbach, came up the idea of using a guy with a burro to emphasize the Colombian origin of the product. Thus Juan Valdez was created. He was portrayed on TV and in print by a Cuban actor, José F. Duval, from 1958 to 1969. From 1969 to 2006 the role was taken by the Colombian actor Carlos José Sánchez Jaramillo with voice-overs, when necessary, by Norman Rose. Finally, in 2006 the Colombian Coffee Growers actually chose a Colombian coffee grower to play the part. Now Juan Valdez is played by Carlos Castañeda who is a real coffee grower from Andes, Antioquia, the department of Colombia where Medellin is located and in the Eje Cafetero.

What Does Juan Valdez On the Label Tell You?

There are lots of great coffees in the world. And Colombia is only the third ranking coffee producer after Brazil and Vietnam. However, Vietnam produces exclusively Robusta coffee and Brazil produces a substantial amount of Robusta. Thus, the biggest producer of Arabica coffee is Colombia. The fact of the matter is that the place in the entire world where you can most reliably find excellent Arabica coffee in is the Andes in the West of Colombia in the coffee growing axis, the Eje Cafetero. The climate with cool temperatures at high altitude, ample rain, excellent drainage, and rich volcanic soil combined with a multi-generational coffee growing culture to produce coffee that is routine of the highest quality. The point of creating Juan Valdez was to provide a visual cue for coffee consumers that would lead them to always purchase the highest quality coffee from Colombia.

Juan Valdez Coffee Shops

A relatively recent addition to the Juan Valdez legacy is the chain of coffee shops with the Juan Valdez name. These are found primarily in Colombia but also throughout the Western Hemisphere. Juan Valdez coffee shops only serve Colombian coffee and feature coffees from specific departments such as Caldas, Huila, and Antioquia. They also feature organic coffees. Any of these can be ordered and brewed on the spot and customers can purchase bags of coffee from virtually any coffee growing region in the country. Juan Valdez

coffee shops are popular meeting places and can be found in central regions of major cities, shopping malls, and even movie theater lobbies.

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

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