

History of Coffee in India

India's romance with coffee goes back nearly 400 years when a Moslem pilgrim, Baba Budan, is credited with secretly bringing back seven coffee seeds from a pilgrimage to the holy land. He is said to have planted these near his mountain cave in Chikmagalur, in the Mysore growing region, now considered the cradle of Indian coffee.

Commercial cultivation of coffee in India began in 1840 when the British established Arabica coffee plantations throughout the mountains of Southern India. They found the tropical climate, high altitude, sunny slopes, ample rainfall, soil rich in humus content, and well drained sub soil ideal for Arabica coffee cultivation.

Coffee Production Today

Today, India is the sixth largest producer of coffee in the world, behind Brazil, Vietnam, Colombia, Indonesia, and Mexico. India produces about 320,000 MT of coffee each year, of which 104,000 MT is Arabica and 216,000 MT is Robusta.

Most of India's coffee is grown in three Southern states: Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, the first two account for nearly 90 percent of total production. Much of the coffee in Kerala and Karnataka is grown in the Western Ghats, a mountain chain that runs parallel to the coast line and about 100 miles inland from the Arabian Sea.

India exports nearly 70 percent of the coffee it produces. These exports consist mainly of high grade beans from both the Arabica and the Robusta growing regions. Most of India's export goes to Europe, Japan and the Middle East where the balanced nature of Indian coffee is greatly valued. Italy, importing 50,000 MT each year, is the largest importer of coffees from India, because they perform particularly well in espresso blends.

Shade Grown and Bird Friendly

All coffee in India is grown in the shade. The shade used in coffee plantations falls into two categories: an upper, permanent canopy and a lower, temporary canopy.

Upper canopy shade consists primarily of original jungle trees (Silver Oak is a popular variety) that may tower 100 feet or more above ground level. The lower canopy is traditionally populated by Dadap (*Erythrina Lithosperma*) trees, which managers can easily prune to regulate the amount of sunshine and rain reaching the coffee plants.

The increasing variety of overhead shade trees provide a sanctuary for birds and enhance the quality of natural organic matter introduced to the soil from falling leaves. This decomposed organic matter enriches the soil, conserves moisture, and reduces the need for chemical fertilizers. Shade trees also control the growth of weeds on the estates and reduce the incidence of insects, pests, and leaf disease.

Hand Picked and Sun Dried

All coffee in India is hand picked without the use of machinery so that only the fully ripe beans are harvested. Under-ripe beans are allowed to remain on the plants and ripen further, requiring the pickers to return to a plant four or five times in a two-month picking season. This

process ensures that India's beans are picked at the peak of flavor.

After picking, coffee berries are sorted to remove any over-ripe or green cherries that were accidentally picked. They are pulped within hours after they are picked, to avoid fermentation of the fruit.

The pulped cherries are then naturally fermented for 12 to 18 hours, mechanically washed to remove the mucilage, and soaked under water to improve its color and cup characteristics. They are then sun dried on patios lined with brick, stones, or concrete. Although this process takes much longer than mechanical drying, growers believe the slower drying actually enhances the flavor in the beans.

Grades of Indian Coffees

As in most producing countries, India processes coffee by the washed (or wet) as well as the natural (or dry) methods. Rigid control of Quality and Grade Designations by India Coffee Board, an agency of the Government of India, ensures the export of only the finest and the most aromatic of India's hand picked coffee beans.

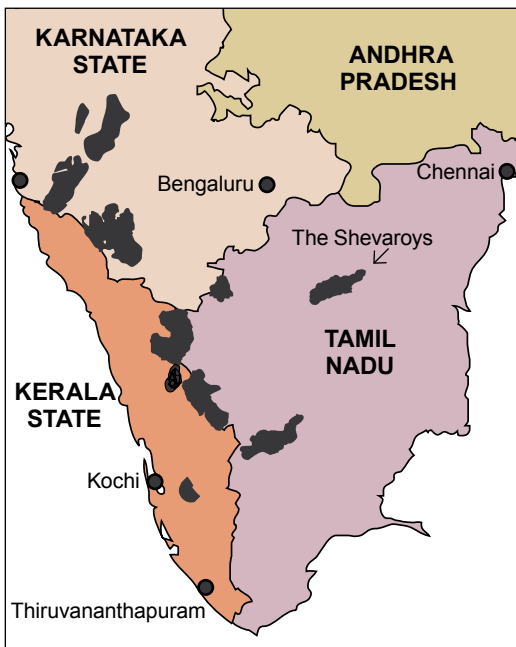
Washed Arabica is known in India as **Plantation Coffee** and washed Robusta as **Parchment Coffee**. Natural processed coffee beans, both Arabica and Robusta, are called Cherry.

These beans are further graded based on size of beans and percentage of imperfections. Plantation-A is the top of the plantation grade. Beans are between 16 and 17 screen size and peaberry up to 2 percent is permitted. Imperfections, such as brokens, bits, browns, and blacks are limited to 2 percent.

Arabica Coffee Cultivars

We bring this grade of coffee beans from three principal cultivars:

Cauvery is a semi-dwarf hybrid genotype obtained from a cross between Caturra and Hibrido-de-Timor. It was developed through international collaboration involving several coffee-growing



Map of South India showing both Arabica and Robusta Growing Regions

countries, including India. Cauvery flowers precociously and hence is an early bearer, with the potential to yield 3,000 kilograms per hectare. Its beans are bluish-green and medium in size.

Cultivar, **S-795** is derived from another cultivar, S-288, which is a putative natural hybrid between *Coffea Arabica* and *Coffea Liberica*, that was originally found in Doobla Estate in Chikmagalur. S-288 proved to be more resistant to leaf rust than Chik and Kent.

However, it also proved to have a higher percentage of defective beans due to false polyembryony. Thus, growers crossed S-288 with Kent Arabica and developed S-795. Since its release in 1945, S-795 has won the affection of a majority of planters and is still the most popular selection among growers in India.

Kent is a natural-hybrid Arabica first discovered in the Doddenguda Estate in the Chikmagalur district of Mysore, and is named after the British owner of the estate at the time. British planters shipped this popular cultivar to several of their colonies, including Kenya and Jamaica.

Because Kent is susceptible to leaf rust, many Indian growers uprooted and replaced this coffee. However, small blocks of these heirloom plants, now more than 80 years old, remain in a few estates.

Versatile Coffee with Many Uses

Plantation-A beans are bright green, uniform in size, and display the result of good preparation. Moisture content is 10.5 percent and the beans offer good roast development delivering an intense sweet peppery aroma while roasting. These beans withstand the full range of roasting, all the way to a dark French, although dark roasting may not be their best use.

It is a balanced coffee with a spiciness in the cup that is uniquely Indian. Its wet fragrance is dominated by chocolate, with peppery and citrus overtones. Its flavor features some acidity and brightness in the cup balanced with peppery and chocolate overtones and a heavy, creamy mouth feel.

Josuma Coffee Company

Josuma Coffee Company imports fine specialty coffees exclusively from India for distribution to brokers, wholesale roasters, and roaster/retailers in the United States and Canada.

Josuma Coffee Company, located in the San Francisco Bay Area, was formed in 1992 to function as a knowledgeable importer of Indian coffees and to act as an effective liaison between the producers in India and the Specialty Coffee market in North America.

All the coffees we import are the result of "direct trade," buying them directly from the estates where they are grown, picked, and processed to meet Josuma's exacting standards. We do not buy any of these coffees from the trade in India. By eliminating several layers of intermediaries, we are able to pass on those savings to you.

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MYSORE PLANTATION-A

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