



Ethiopian Organic Coffee Home of the biodiversity of *Coffea arabica* L., the first and finest coffee bean of the world¹

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The word "coffee" is related to a region of Ethiopia where coffee was discovered: 'Kaffa'. The word 'Kaffa' is inherited from the hieroglyphic nouns 'KA' and 'Afa'.



'KA' means God and 'AFA' earth including all plants. The word KAFFEE (COFFEE) from its birth-place is the land or plant of GOD.

More genetically diverse strains of *C. arabica* exist in Ethiopia than anywhere else in the world, which has lead bota-

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nists and scientists to agree that Ethiopia is the centre of origin, diversification and dissemination of the coffee plant.



Coffee in the heart and mind

"As soon as coffee is in your stomach, there is a general commotion. Ideas begin to move...smiles arise, the paper is covered. Coffee is your ally and writing ceases to be a struggle" - Honoré de Balzac (1799-1859)

"Experts now generally agree that there is no consistent scientific evidence to prove coffee is detrimental to your health ... A recent study at the University of California at Davis even suggests that coffee may be good for you ... freshly brewed coffee contains antioxidant compounds that may carry as much power as vitamins C and E". Denise (2004).

Coffea arabica L. (Rubiaceae) grew wild in the forests of south western Ethiopia, in Kaffa and Buno, since time immemorial, or since Lucy (the first fossil of human ancestor) as forages for food along Awash River. But its special qualities only became known to man about 1000 years ago. An Ethiopian legend says that an Abyssinian goat herder called 'Kaldi' noticed how frisky his goats became after consuming coffee berries. He then decided to try some himself. He passed his discovery on to a monk, who transplanted the berries near his monastery at Lake Tana, perfected his roasting, grinding and brewing process and found that coffee helped to keep

monks awake and alert during their devotions.

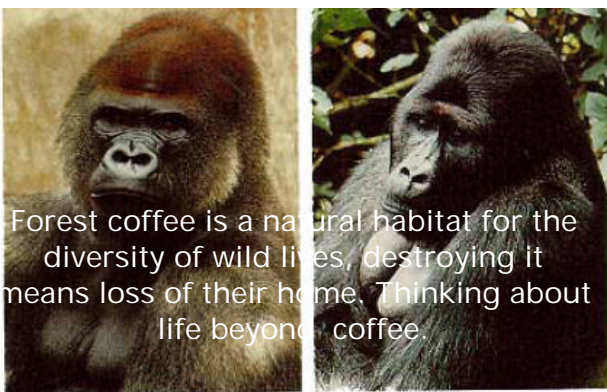
Since then coffee drinking entered in Ethiopian social life. Coffee was used in meetings, celebrations, mournings and to ward off drowsiness. Today the coffee ceremony - where coffee is roasted, grounded and brewed - is a centre to Ethiopian social life.

The ground around the brazier where the beans are roasted and brewed is covered with grass and flowers, and the air is perfumed with incense. In a world where time has long become a commodity, the Ethiopian coffee ceremony - it takes at least an hour, at least 3 cups should be drunken - takes us to a time when value was given to human relation and discourse.

All seeds of today's Arabica coffee spread from Ethiopia first into its neighbours, in the Middle East, and from there to the rest of the world. Ethiopia is the first country in Africa in terms of coffee production, albeit it accounts for only 2% of the coffee traded world-wide.

For coffee connoisseurs, Ethiopian coffee is not only the world's first and finest. This is both because of the diversity of sublime flavours quality, but also because in a world where consumers everywhere are increasingly worried about the effect of chemical pesticides and fertilisers on their health and the environment in general. Ethiopian coffee remains naturally organic. It is wild and wonderful.

10% of Ethiopian coffee is grown and harvested in natural forests, while a further 35% is grown in semi-forest. The soil of the forest ground is enriched with compost from falling leaves, making fertilisers unnecessary. In these forests the high degree of genetic diversity has created a natural balance of pests and pathogens, making synthetic pesticides unnecessary, too. Ethiopia's coffee forests, where the coffee plants are sheltered under a canopy of taller trees, constitute a unique eco-system - men crop the coffee, gather honey and spices, but the forest remains intact, thereby not disturbing animals such as the Colobus monkey and a huge variety of bird species which also rely on the forest for their food. 60% of coffee production is grown in small family garden farms, intercropped with other produce. Only 5% is recently technified into plantation coffee.



Forest coffee is a natural habitat for the diversity of wild lives, destroying it means loss of their home. Thinking about life beyond coffee.

95% of exported coffee is the product from subsistence farmers who do not use chemicals, fertilisers or pesticides, in the production process.

Certified organic coffee (BCS* ÖKO-GARANTIE GMBH, GERMANY) accounts for only about 0.1% of the total production. This sector is practiced since 1999 by 'Oromia' Coffee Farmers Cooperative Unions in the south western regions, 'Sidamo' and 'Yirga Chefe' Farmers Cooperative Unions in southern Ethiopia.



Typical Ethiopian coffee ceremony

All have achieved their own success stories. Since the birth and flourishment of modern technified coffee industry around 17th century elsewhere in the world, the health of coffee farmers and consumers are seriously threatened by agrochemical inputs and the coffee ecosphere forcibly contaminated by arsenals of synthetic pesticides.

These facts remained almost unworrying to Ethiopian coffee farmers, consumers and the coffee ecology.

GENUSS für die Sinne aus dem Ursprungsland **DES KAFFEES**

Wildwachsende Kaffeesträucher wurden zuerst im äthiopischen Hochland entdeckt. In Äthiopien gehörte Kaffee als Genussgetränk schon immer zum Alltag, die Zubereitung des Kaffees zelebriert man dort auch heute noch auf ganz besondere Weise.

Un äthiopische Kaffeekultur zu erleben, muss man nicht auf das afrikanische Kontinent gehen, auch im eigenen Land kann man diese unverwundliche Art der Kaffeeverbereitung und des Kaffeegenusses erleben, z. B. bei äthiopischen Freunden oder in einem äthiopischen Restaurant. Wer möchte, kann sich auch mit einer selbst eigenen Zeremonie von einem Party-Service zubereiten lassen. Doch dazu später. Äthiopien, in diesem ostafrikanischen Land liegt die Heimat des Kaffees. Auch heute ist Kaffee einer der wichtigsten Exportprodukte des Landes. Von Kaffeeliebhabern hoch geschätzte Kaffees wie Sidamo, Harar oder Yirgacheffe wachsen in den äthiopischen Hochlagen. Anders als in manch anderen Kaffeeproduktionsländern...



Traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony in western life



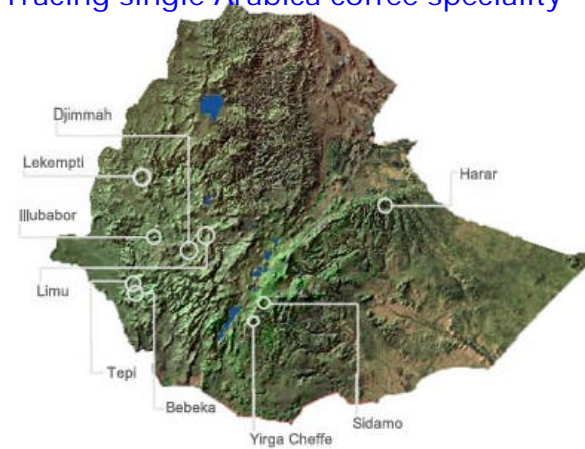
Harvesting of red ripened coffee cherry



Drying washed Arabica green beans

acidity and body. There are many roasters who add this flavour into their blends, but it can also be sold as an original gourmet or special origin flavour.

Tracing single Arabica coffee speciality



Analysis on coffee cup-of-excellence

'Limu' coffee

This is known for its spicy and winy flavour and attracts many roasters, especially in Europe and the USA. It has good acidity and body and the washed Limu is one of the premium coffees. It has a me-

dium-sized bean, and is greenish-bluish in colour and mostly round in shape.

'Sidamo' coffee

It has a medium sized bean, greenish-greyish in colour. Sidamo washed coffee, known for its balanced taste and good flavour, is called sweet coffee. It has fine acidity and good body and is produced in the southern part of the country. It is always blended for gourmet or speciality coffee.

'Yirga Cheffe' coffee - Finest flavour on the earth

It has an intense flavour known as flora. The washed 'Yirga Cheffe' is one of the best highland grown coffees. It has fine acidity and rich body. Many roasters are attracted to its delicate fine flavour and are willing to pay a premium for it.

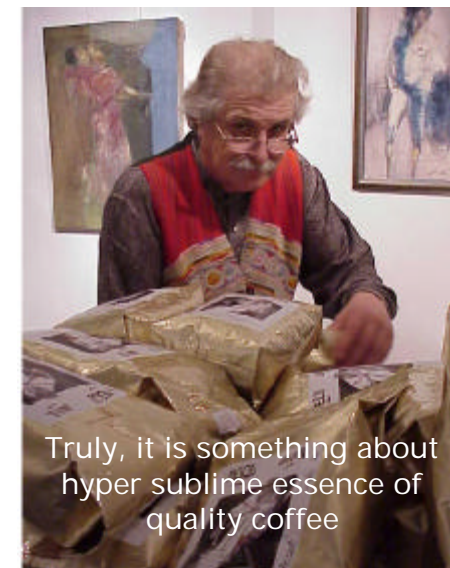
The coffee speciality in Ethiopia

'Harrar' coffee (native Mocca)

This type of coffee is produced in the Eastern Highlands. The bean has a medium size, with a greenish-yellowish colour. It has medium acidity and full body and a distinctive mocca flavour. It is one of the highest premium coffees in the world.

'Wollega' ('Nekempt') coffee

This type is produced in western Ethiopia, and the medium-to-bold bean is mainly known for its fruity taste. It has a greenish, brownish colour, with good



Truly, it is something about hyper sublime essence of quality coffee

Others

There are also other origins, such as Tepi and Bebeke, which are known for their low acidity but better body. In addition, there are commercially important origins which are used for special blends. (Partly adapted from "Ethiopia cradle of the wonder bean coffee Arabica [abyssinica], a bulletin published by Coffee and Tea Authority).

Major research & development challenges

- ☛ Loss of biodiversity due to deforestation and uprooting of coffee land races to be replaced by other crops
- ☛ The fluctuations and global fall of coffee prices
- ☛ Innovations in areas of organic coffee and quality control
- ☛ Lack of diversified and accepted quality cash crops
- ☛ Under utilisation of existing natural resources
- ☛ Knowledge transfer
- ☛ Rural health care and infra-structures
- ☛ Lack of donors to invest on coffee research and development activity

Designed research strategy

"Optimising of organic coffee production and natural resource management in Ethiopia"

Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen Ethiopian rural economy by establishing sustainable organic coffee production systems in pursuit of the following subgoals:

- ➔ Analysis of current organic coffee production
- ➔ Designing of sustainable fertility management strategies
- ➔ Developing strategies against pests and diseases with special emphasis on biological methods
- ➔ Identification and promotion of organic coffee based on naturally inherited high quality land races and wild gene pools
- ➔ Establishment of quality management aspects for organically grown coffee based on endogenous and exogenous factors determining quality
- ➔ Diversification of rural income by fostering organic cash crop production, spices and ornamentals
- ➔ Establishment of a centre of excellence for organic agriculture focus-

sing on agronomic knowledge transfer and rural economy

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