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Aroma

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AROMA

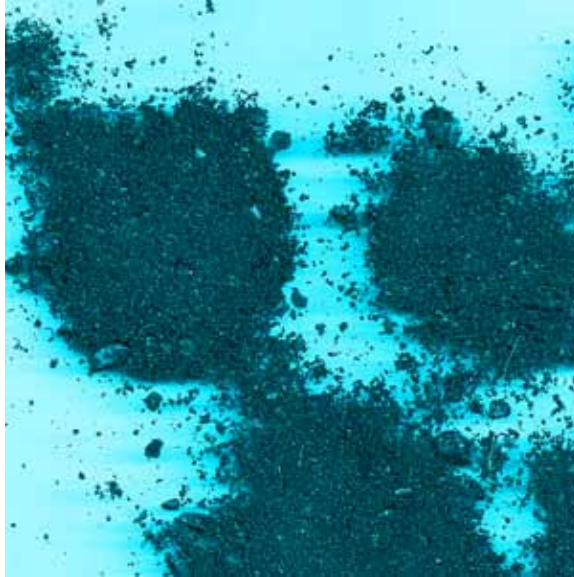
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photos & design by Benjamin Zender

Each day in the United States, millions of Americans, roughly 54 percent of the population, according to the National Coffee Association individually consumes over three cups of coffee ("Coffee Culture"). We share this activity with millions of others in nations around the globe, so much so that the global coffee market is worth billions of dollars. For many in the United States, the first thing that comes to mind is Dunkin Donuts and Starbucks. How could they not? In some areas of the U.S., Starbucks appears on nearly every street corner, and we are inundated with advertisements for Dunkin Donuts telling us that "America runs on Dunkin." Certainly, both companies combined brew the lion's share of coffee here in the U.S. U.S. companies are also key players in the international market (Wild 3).

Coffee in the United States has moved beyond a caffeine addiction or even an obsession - it is permeating our culture, blending into it as a norm, and becoming part of our identity. I am certainly aware that it is part of my identity. We have coffee in the morning to "wake us up." We have it at night to "keep

we meet for coffee. We have coffee with dessert. We casually get to know each other over a cup of coffee. We discuss family matters over coffee. The fact is: People gather around coffee.

Initially, it was the "buzz" from the caffeine that made folks want to talk, converse and gather around coffee. It is this social element that spawned the world's first coffee houses, which were established about five hundred years ago, not unlike a bar or the coffee houses of today. Socialization goes hand in hand with the sharing of substances. The socialization factor of coffee has remained constant since its birth, but where was it born and how did it come to essentially rule the modern world?



GROUNDS

The details of when and where coffee originated are uncertain. However, the regions of Arabia and Ethiopia

are often credited as the place of origin. The first written historical reference to coffee was by an Arabian physician and dates back to the tenth century (Pendergrast 5). It is believed that Ethiopia was cultivating coffee for centuries prior to this. According to Ethiopian legend, we can all thank a goat herd for our morning java. The legend tells the story of Kaldi, a young goat herder who spent his days playing his pipe and allowing his goats to roam. The goats would return when he played a particular sound. But one day, when the goats did not return at the sound, Kaldi kept playing the pipe until they were found. He ventured into the rain forest and found them jumping, kicking and making noise. The young man thought they were bewitched and going to die. He retreated home, and, shortly after, the goats followed, they were fine, with no harm done. The next morning before heading out, Kaldi checked the goats again, and still they appeared to be fine. As they moved out for the day, Kaldi followed his goats. They returned to the very same place and began eating berries from a plant he had never seen before.

Coffee actually derives its name from the Arab word for wine; qahwa (Pendergrast, 6) and the Turkish word "kahve," which roughly translates to "a drink made from the berries of plants," ("Turkish Times"). As it spread from the Ottoman Empire to Europe it was known as "Wine of Araby" (Wild, ix).

us up." We even drink it at work, considering that many employers provide it for their employees. This is likely intentional to keep them from dozing off at their desks! We take coffee breaks, and

Shortly after the goats resumed their wild behavior, Kaldi figured that they had not been hurt; so he too tried the berries. Kaldi felt like he could take on the world. He felt so energized and excited, that he ran home to tell his father of the amazing berries the goats had found. His amazement was due to the feeling that the berries provided and that it seemed to wear off (Pendergrast 4). Inside Kaldi's berries were two green seeds. By removing the flesh of the berry and roasting the green seeds to brown, we get--you guessed it--coffee beans. What Kaldi and his goats were experiencing was a caffeine "buzz."

JAVA JOINTS

The first coffee house appeared before the end of the fifteenth century. Known by Muslims as kaveh kanes, they provided a place for the less fortunate to enjoy this increasingly popular beverage. Not surprisingly, they began to socialize. Throughout history, rulers and religious leaders of Arab and European regions made several attempts to ban coffee and close coffee houses. Although some efforts were immediately successful, most were thwarted. Those that did succeed did so only temporarily. Hence, the coffee houses of Mecca were officially closed by its governor



beaten with a club called a 'cudgel.' The second time they were caught, they were sewn up in a leather bag, and thrown into the nearest river to drown" (Turkish Times). Apparently, coffee was of greater importance than beating or death, as citizens continued to consume the beverage until the ban was overturned. It was later written into Turkish law that if a woman was not provided with adequate amounts of coffee she could legally divorce her husband! (Turkish Times). If only things were still so simple. Threats to the elixir arose again as Christian priests proposed a ban only for Pope Clement VIII to express his approval by claiming, "...this Satan's drink is so delicious...

it would be a pity to let the infidels have exclusive use of it. We shall fool Satan by baptizing it and making it a truly Christian beverage" (Qtd in Pendergrast, 7-8).

Midway through the seventeenth century, coffee was being cultivated and consumed on three continents. Explorations and colonization by the French and the Dutch would introduce coffee to the Americas in the early 1700's. The trade routes were expanding and

coffee became a hot commodity. The importance of coffee grew to significance for the Ottoman Turks as an export commodity. In an effort to protect their lucrative asset, they forbid coffee berries and plants capable of germination, to leave the country. As with any substance that is banned, it began to be smuggled out illegally and, before too long, coffee began to appear all over Europe. Export nations, like the Ottoman Turks, recognized its value and restricted trade of the actual plants. Thankfully, South America was smuggling then too.

In 1727, a Brazilian diplomat was requested to mediate a border dispute between the governors of French and Dutch Guiana. After nurturing a mutual agreement between the two, it is believed that he coveted the wife of the French governor. Upon his leaving, she presented him with ripe coffee cherries embedded in a bouquet

Prior to roasting, the process to decaffeinate coffee involves soaking the beans in "methylene chloride..., a nasty carcinogen," ("Buzz"). Mmmm...decaf anyone?

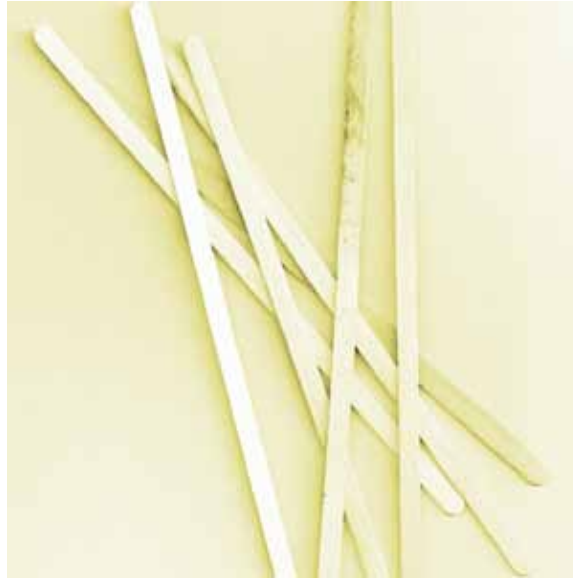
in 1511 – only to be re-opened by the Sultan of Cairo, an accustomed coffee-drinker (Pendergrast 6). There was also a prohibition of coffee in Constantinople in 1656. The punishments, if caught, were nothing short of what we would consider barbaric: "If a person broke this law, they were

of flowers, which he planted when he returned to Brazil (Wild 172, Pendergrast 16). This gave rise to what would become the world's greatest coffee kingdom. Largely due to French and Dutch expansion, by 1750, coffee was grown and harvested on five continents (Pendergrast 16).

In the more densely populated areas, coffee houses continued rising in popularity as social gathering places. The popularity partially stemmed from coffees' sobering nature. Until the introduction of coffee in Europe, alcohol was the reigning beverage of choice. With alcohol consumption causing impairment, coffee provided a favorable alternative. This essentially led to another attempt at outlawing coffee. Coffee houses in London were only open to men. The men figured out that they could drink in the taverns and sober up in the coffee houses, often spending entire days going back and forth between the two. The wives of these men raised a petition to King Charles II, who elaborated on it and "issued A Proclamation for the Suppression of Coffee houses," causing an uproar in London. For fear of an overthrow of the monarchy, the King rescinded his proclamation

(Pendergrast, 14).

Coffee houses continued to flourish. Across London, people could access physicians, lawyers, fortune-tellers, actors, poets, writers, etc. One could enter, buy a cup of coffee, take a seat, and upon leaving the coffee house, have gained a wealth of knowledge. This led to the nickname of Penny Universities. Coffee patrons participated in "extraordinary" public discourse in more than two thousand coffee houses by the end of the seventeenth century in London alone (Pendergrast 12). At the same time, the men assembling in coffee houses, lacking the inebriating effects of alcohol, were able to conduct business. One London coffee house, in particular, frequently served seafarers and merchants. The nature



of the clientele attracted insurance underwriters, for which the owner, Edward Lloyd, prepared and kept records of the ships. His once coffee house establishment evolved into what we now know as Lloyd's of London. Newspaper publications and financial institutions, such as banks and the Stock Exchange, also grew out of coffee house connections.

Likewise, by the end of the seventeenth century, North America would see its first coffee house. Due to the infusion of coffee into the European culture, the colonists could not leave it behind. In 1689, the city of Boston became home to the first American coffee house. The early American coffee houses allowed patrons to get drunk and sober without having to cross the street. Patrons could now purchase beer and coffee under the same roof. Consistent with the social nature of the London coffee houses, American coffee house-taverns also functioned as meeting places. However, the meetings did not swirl around trivial matters of poetry and fortune telling. The men that gathered here focused on discussing trade, business and politics. Later on, Daniel Webster would refer to Boston's Green Dragon coffee house-tavern as "the headquarters of the Revolution" as

In addition to coffee's roast, regional growing conditions, such as shade, sun, wind and soil, influence the acidity, body, flavor and aroma ("Coffee Culture", 6).

Region	Body	Flavor
East Africa & Arabia	medium-full	floral, chocolate
Americas & Carribean	light-medium	lively, fruity
Indonesia, Pacific	full	earthy, exotic

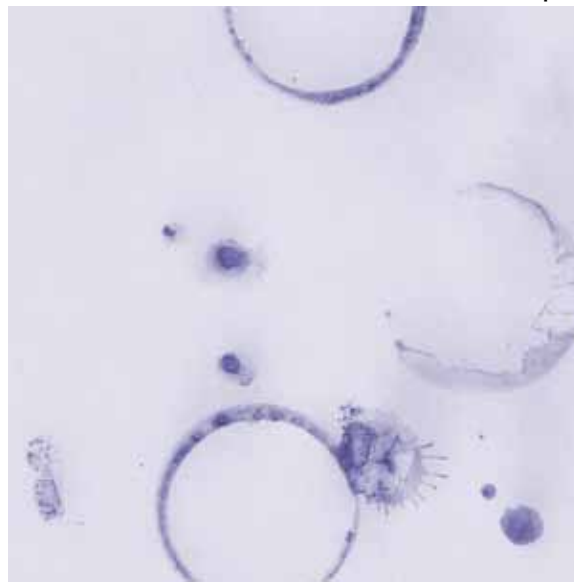
some of its regular patrons included John Adams, Paul Revere and other leaders of the American Revolution (Pendergrast 15). Merchant's Coffee House deserves an honorable mention, as in the late 1700's two of its locations were witnesses to historical events. The words "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" first rang in the ears of American citizens as The Declaration of Independence was read aloud to the public for the first time in Philadelphia, outside Merchant's Coffee House. In 1789, New York City, serving as our nation's capital at the time, hosted a welcoming ceremony in front of Merchant's Coffee House for George Washington at his inauguration (Wild 16).

WAKING THE WORLD UP TO FAIR TRADE

The world has changed tremendously since the days of George Washington, but one thing remains strong – the coffee, and its global reach. Today, Brazil, the long reigning king of coffee production, has been dethroned. The crown is now worn by Vietnam. The United States is essentially responsible for this changing of the guard. After the use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War, the nation was left "massively defoliated." The United States, in conjunction with the World Bank conducted a refoiliation effort of the country. This was done with "low-grade Robusta coffee bushes" (Wild 6). Robusta is considered to be low-grade because the plant is less delicate and heartier than its Arabica cousin. It is not as sensitive to climate conditions as other varieties, and contains nearly twice the caffeine content (Wild 6). As a result, this stronger, cheaper variety has impacted the market considerably. It also allows for specialty and often more expensive varieties to be blended with it. The process is similar to cutting cocaine with other substances to increase the supply for distribution, and decrease the potency. Combining more exclu-

sive varieties with Robusta stretches the amount of higher quality coffee while actually increasing the caffeine content. Now "cut" this impact with the already underpaid farm workers, and--Viola! ,you have created the niche of Fair Trade.

Fair Trade is a movement, not to ban, but to reform and regulate the farming practices and social responsibilities of trade. Fair Trade Certification is not exclusive to coffee, however given that it is one of the world's largest exports and the leading organic import (Strenk 2); the rise of Fair Trade Certification is directly related to the coffee industry. With the constant farming of coffee and its expansion around the world, the price of coffee was increasing for consumers on one end; whereas on the other end, farmers and laborers were not reaping any benefit of that increase. Fair Trade, regulated by the Fair-Trade Labeling Organizations International, ensures that producers pay a premium price to the roaster (Strenk 1). There are also guidelines to prevent use of pesticides on the crops. Fair-Trade is proving to benefit all. Under better conditions and higher standards, the roaster or farmer can produce a higher quality crop,



further receiving a secure price for those crops helps to support the farmer and their local economy. The benefit to us as consumers is first in our wallets, as the retail price of coffee should stay relatively stable. Also, resting in the fact that large coffee retailers like Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts are purchasing a product of higher quality that is then passed on to us. According to Strenk, "Starbucks has been buying FTC coffee for

10 years and is now the largest purchaser in the world" (1).

SPEAKING OF STARBUCKS...

The industry and operations have given rise to the terms; "organically grown, shade grown, bird friendly and fair trade," ("Coffee Culture") used to describe coffee, but Starbucks has cre-

ated an entirely new coffee language beyond the simplicity of java and Joe. Unlike its counterpart Dunkin Donuts, which is gaining a reputation as the working-class coffee, Starbucks brings a more elite feel to the coffee table. A cup of coffee at Starbucks is a bit pricier than one at Dunkin Donuts, but it is the language that really sets them apart. At Dunkin Donuts, one can simply order a “medium caramel coffee regular,” a straight order at a straight price. At Starbucks, an introductory course in Italian may be required. A similar order would sound more like “Can I get a Grande caramel macchiato?” You can order your coffee or espresso beverage any number of ways—provided you can differentiate between coffee, espresso, cappuccino, latte, mocha, au lait, and frappuccino! Remember the days of the simple sizes, small, medium and large? Gone. At Starbucks, your size options are tall, grande and venti, and the only thing shorter than the tall, is the short! The terminology grows increasingly complex when you personalize it (yes, that’s right America; you can personalize your coffee), after you have mastered the appropriate “Starbuckian” lingo, of course. Would you like that hot, iced, low-fat, non-fat, or half-caf? This language, lounge style furniture inside and bistro tables outside, and of course the coffee, create a taste of Italy that does not require a passport. But coffee language continues to expand beyond Starbucks.



Currently, a class distinction is emerging in coffee culture. The re-birth of Dunkin Donuts, now known mainly for its coffee and not its donuts, can be linked to affordability. A regular cup of coffee can still be obtained for less than \$2, whereas those that indulge at Starbucks and other specialty coffee shops, whose prices hover around \$4 per cup, are unlikely to purchase and choke down gas station coffee. Aficionados, familiar with the regions, terms, and flavors from all over the world, are willing to pay for it. Coffee by-the-pound begins between \$5-7 and climbs steadily from there. The world’s most expensive coffee; Kopi Luwak, nets upwards of \$100-\$600 per pound!

COFFEE MAKES THE WORLD GO 'ROUND

Coffee has traveled around the globe since Kaldi frolicked with his wild goats. The history and culture of coffee even possess similar features of the brew itself. The history is full and rich. The culture adheres to and permeates civilizations like an aroma. Around the world there are legends, icons, logos, smells and tastes that forge social and cultural bonds with coffee: “Ethiopians still serve coffee in an elaborate ceremony, which often takes nearly an hour” (Pendergrast 5). The fresh beans are roasted over a fire, ground by hand, and boiled to create what I can only imagine is one hell of a cup of coffee. Lastly, there is the “buzz” that keeps economies and industry bustling. Coffee has been ruling trade since its birth and is still going, well...strong. In the realization of its massive scope, it is difficult to imagine what our world would look like without it. Many Americans might very well agree with the Ottoman Turks; death is better than life without coffee!

KOPI LUWAK

The Indonesian civet cat, which is actually a monkey, feeds on coffee berries, digesting all but the beans. Farm-workers comb through the dung for these prized cherries, which when brewed produce the world’s most expensive coffee, known for its sweet, tantalizing aroma!