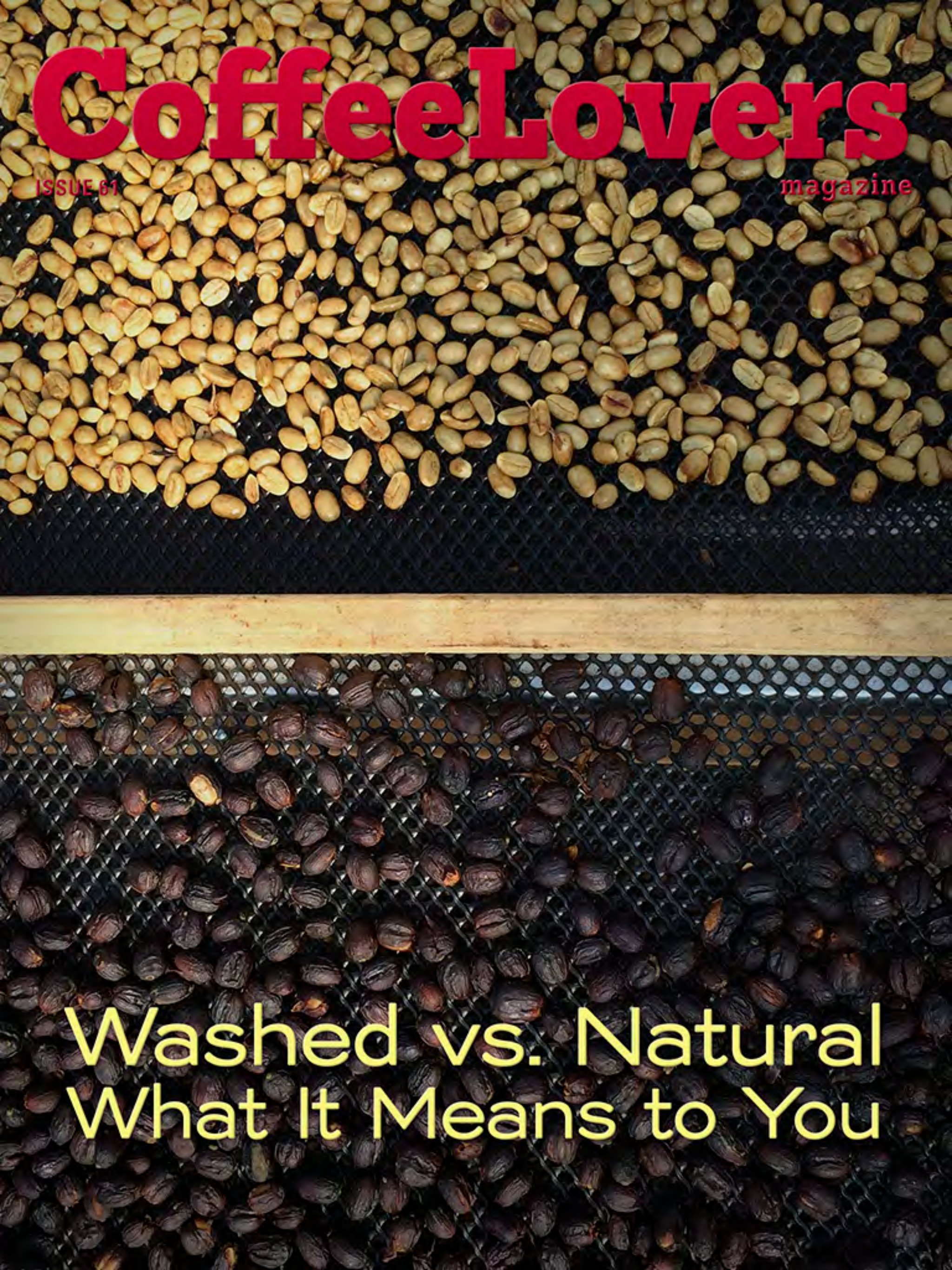




CoffeeLovers

ISSUE 61

magazine

Washed vs. Natural
What It Means to You

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Washed vs Natural – What it Means to You

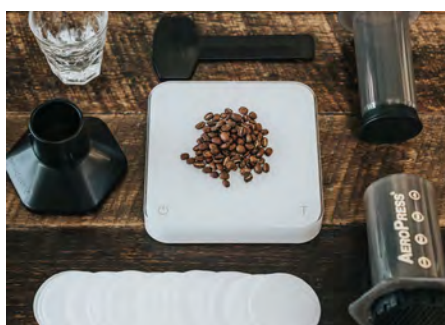
Joseph Robertson



VIDEO

Tegene - Ethiopia Direct Trade Coffee

Coffee Lovers TV



HOW TO BREW

How to Do the Aeropress

Joseph Robertson



BOOK PREVIEW

The Soul, the Sword, and the Guest PART 1

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Sharing Coffee with Michael Mage

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Coffee Lovers Radio

From the Editor

Joseph Robertson

Little Lemon, Devil Drink, Sound Science, and More...

This Month in Coffee

Coffee Tastes



Acidity

Usually, the pleasant tartness of a fine coffee. Acidity, along with flavor, aroma, and body, is one of the principal categories used by professional tasters in cupping, or sensory evaluation of coffee. When not used to describe cup characteristics, the term acidity may refer to pH, or literal acidity, or to certain constituents present in coffee that ostensibly produce indigestion or nervousness in some individuals.

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Source: Coffee Circle

Washed processed or Natural processed?

By Joseph Robertson

THINK ABOUT THE FIRST TIME A COFFEE MADE YOU say “wow! I didn’t know coffee could taste like that...” Maybe it was super sweet and fruity, or in some way had a strong distinct flavor that you never thought possible in coffee (often fruit, sometimes florals, sometimes rich chocolate).

This is the power of a naturally processed coffee. There are more sugars involved, more tastes are imparted directly from the fruit, and in the end, you get a coffee which has a strong, distinct taste which you might otherwise never have associated with coffee.

The inevitable question then, when you learn that this is a naturally processed coffee, is “what is the difference?” What is a natural coffee and what is a washed processed coffee?

Recently at a coffee festival called CoffeeCon, I was sharing samples of 3 different coffees at the Coffee Lovers Magazine booth. Two of the coffees on the table were washed processed coffees. One tasted of sweet lemons, and the other of milk chocolate with dancing hints of tangerine. They were very delicious coffees and everyone found something in them to enjoy.



The third coffee on the table was a naturally processed Ethiopian. You could smell rich berry fruit emanating from that side of the table the whole day. Everyone who picked up a sample cup was immediately smacked in the face with aromas of fruit - you didn't need to even taste the coffee to know that something different and seemingly special was going on there.

These kinds of coffees make great show coffees because they are so in-your-face and different from the typical. I am a big fan of naturally processed coffees for a number of reasons - not the least of which is that you get big fun and delicious flavors in your cup, but also these coffees tend to be an easy way to show you that coffee can taste wildly different.

The juxtaposition of the three coffees - all tasting different, but one wildly so - begged the question, why? And also how, and what should I choose, and WHAT?

I'd like to show you three different points of view on what separates washed processed coffees and naturally processed coffees, so that you have a clearer picture when it comes time to getting a new bag of fresh roasted coffee, or ordering a brewed cup in a cafe.



What is the overall difference between Washed and Natural coffees?

Mechanically the difference between the two types of coffee comes down to the processing on the farm. After the coffee cherries are picked, the fruit needs to be processed away down to the pit, which we know as the coffee bean. There are seemingly infinite ranges of methods to take care of this process, and they sit on the spectrum of two opposing dynamics - a process of milling and washing away the fruit immediately, and a process of allowing the fruit to dry and essentially 'raisin' onto the pit before being mechanically separated (By 'mechanically separated' imagine a mill that squishes out the pit and separates the fruit pulp from the coffee pit).

While the fruit grows and develops, it imparts natural sugars and acids into the pit, which we can coax out into aromas and flavors through roasting. The natural process - allowing the fruit to dry before removing it - concentrates the natural sugars of the fruit further into the coffee pit before it is completely removed. If you imagine the distinct strong sugary sweet flavor of a raisin, that is essentially what is being imparted into the pit of the coffee (though the flavors are that of the actual coffee fruit, of course).



The Difference Between Washed and Natural Coffee

From Your Perspective

The most notable difference - when it comes to drinking the actual coffee - between a washed processed coffee and a natural comes down to the way in which we perceive the flavors. I like to describe the difference like this:

A naturally processed coffee will have one or two distinct and dominating flavor characteristics. They will often be a fruit and will be naturally sweet. It's usually easy to point to the coffee and say "it tastes like blueberries!" Or in the case of a Yemen I had recently, the ground coffee smelled exactly like fresh peaches. Very strong and distinct.

A washed processed coffee will have much more subtle tasting characteristics but will have far more flavors that you can discern. Natural sweetness will be a hallmark of quality washed coffee. You may need to search a bit to be able to communicate the tastes, but inevitably as you enjoy different cups of a washed processed coffee, you'll discover far more differing and complex tastes than in a natural.

What this means in the end for you brewing at home comes down to what you enjoy in your cup of coffee. Do you want one or two distinct strong natural flavors, or do you want a more complex but subtle exploration?



There's no right answer, and I personally enjoy both (though my favorite coffee in the world - Yemen - is always naturally processed).

From the Roaster's Perspective

To give you an idea of what the roaster thinks about and goes through when it comes to comparing a washed vs a natural coffee, I asked Jesse Nelson, owner, and roaster of Conduit Coffee, to give us his perspective.

JESSE NELSON: The experience can be astounding and is often a key doorway to start discovering better coffee. Since most people are accustomed to drinking washed coffees, the experience of tasting a wild fruit bomb of a coffee can be life-altering. Since they're often wild and complicated, brewing can be a bit finicky, but so rewarding. A lot of naturals are a little more water soluble and brew a bit different. Environmentally, naturals use much less water in the processing, which may make an impact on the consumers' choice.

[When it comes to roasting], the consistency and cleanliness of the green coffee seeds are the biggest factors in adjusting the roasting process. Natural processed coffees are known for having more defects and inconsistencies with the processing because they require much keener picking and sorting. Also, natural processed coffees can be punctuating in a blend, so we pick carefully which blends we want to have that fruity edge.



Of course, this varies depending on origin and other variables, especially as we're learning about experiments at the producer level. There are some amazing new "naturals" that are clean and full of balanced character.

From the Farmer/Producer's Perspective

The greatest difference between Washed and Natural processed coffees is one which you almost never see, and it occurs at the farm/processing center.

After coffee cherries are harvested, the producer needs to remove the fruit to get at the seed. You know now that this means they either remove the fruit right away and wash the seed or let it all dry before removing the remaining fruit.

The difference between these two processes is extreme and is often dictated by available resources. To a second degree, the choice is also dependent upon what they are able to sell (if they have a buyer looking specifically for naturally the washed or naturally processed version of their coffee).

Washed coffees take a huge amount of water in order to process. After mechanically separating the fruit pulp, the pits are taken through a series of water baths. They are given time to ferment a little bit during parts of these baths in order to make it possible to remove the outer layers of the pit, getting down to the green 'bean' which will be roasted.

but
first,
coffee



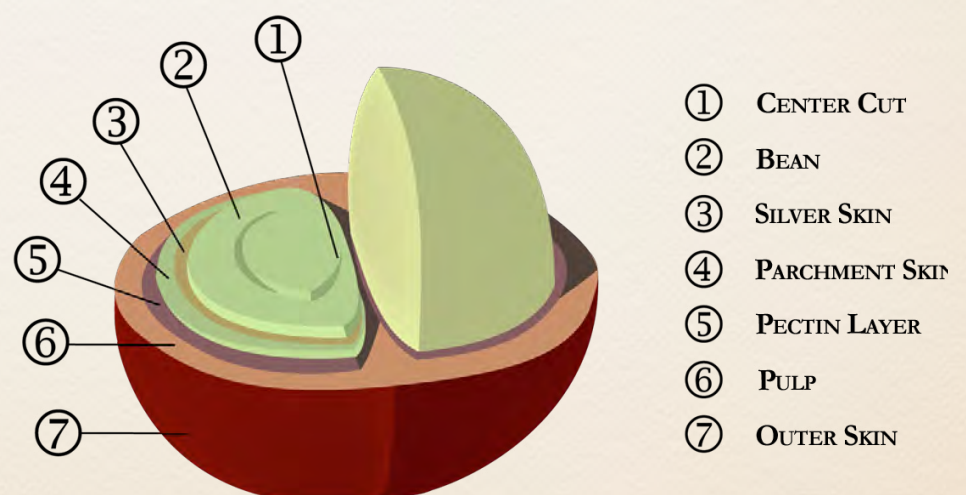
One of the unseen costs of washed processing coffees is the effect on the ecosystem. Most farms are not able to effectively recycle the water that they use for washing coffee, so that water - now filled with coffee fruit and pit parts - ends up in the local water table, which can be detrimental to the ecosystem.

The benefits of washed processing are that it is easier for the producer to create consistent clean tasting coffee.

Natural processing uses a tiny fraction of the amount of water (and in most cases, none during the processing). The fruit is best dried on raised beds. Some of the challenges with this process can be in managing the moisture level during the drying. If producers don't have proper drying areas, they can have consistency and taste problems. Rain can be disastrous. However, the overall resources to produce natural coffee is far less than washed.

The combination of fewer resources needed, being better for the local ecosystem, and increasing knowledge and experience in producing natural coffees has led to a growing trend in producing more natural coffees around the world.

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WORLD ATLAS OF COFFEE

This is a very comprehensive book on everything about coffee. You can explore all the origins of coffee, and a bit of their history. You also get the opportunity to learn everything from coffee genetics, varieties, roasting, and brewing. It's a beautiful book that I think every coffee lover should have.

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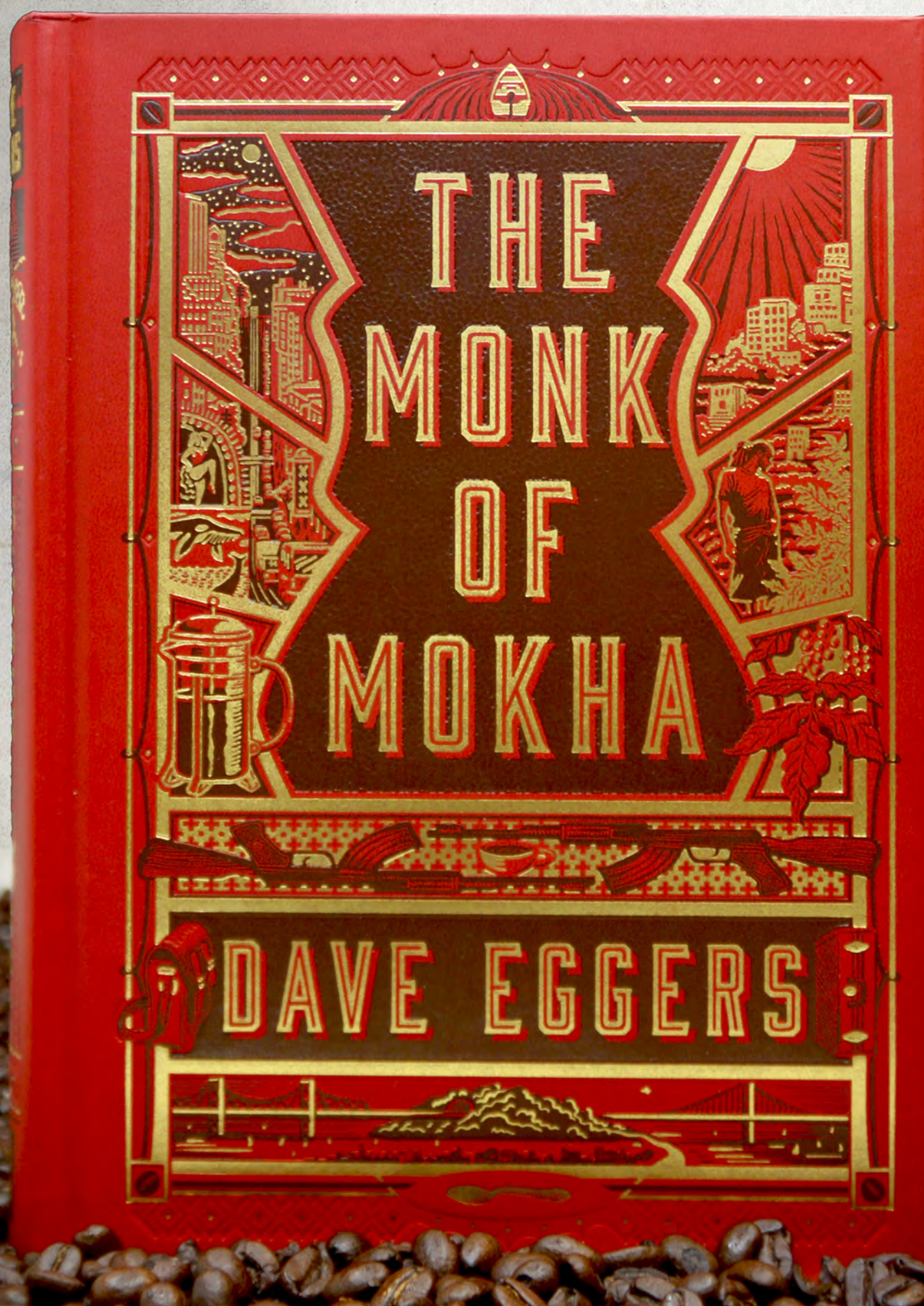
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Featuring the coffee of Tegene Abebe, a coffee farmer in Ethiopia - this is one of the first direct to farm trade coffees to come from a small individual coffee farmer out of Ethiopia in over 20 years. Learn all about Tegene and the intricacies of Ethiopian coffee.

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Coffee Facts

Specialty Coffee

Specialty Coffee is the highest certified grade of coffee. The primary method for grading the green coffee is based on the existence of defects, quality of sorting, taste analysis, and moisture level.

Below Specialty is Premium, Exchange, then Standard and Off-Grade. It takes an enormous amount of effort to create Specialty grade coffee, which is why most coffee in the world is considered severely underpriced.

HOW TO BREW: AEROPRESS

What you need: *Aeropress, 12 oz mug or carafe, coffee ground medium.*

1. Place filter in Aeropress, rinse filter in place.
2. Add 100 grams water to the mug/carafe, place Aeropress (with wet filter) on top.
3. Add 22 grams of medium ground coffee.
4. Starting timer, add 100 grams of water, stir and wait.
6. At 30 seconds, add 150 grams of water, stir and cap the press.
7. At 1:40, start pressing slowly such that you finish your press at 2 minutes.
8. Enjoy! (to adjust your taste in future brewing, start with the grind size).



THE SOUL, THE SWORD, AND THE GUEST

COFFEE WITH THE BEDOUINS
IN LITTLE PETRA



BY STEVEN P. UNGER
BOOK PREVIEW PART 1

During holidays like Eid, weddings, and periods of mourning we serve coffee frequently. For us Bedouins, coffee is more than just a drink. It is an important symbol of hospitality and trust. Offering a cup of coffee to someone and having it accepted shows mutual goodwill. It also plays an important role in our way of doing business, negotiating, and discussing marriage. For example, if one of us has a problem with another person, the family goes to the other person's family to resolve the dispute. When the host asks them to drink coffee, it means the problem is solved.

—Wadirumnomads.com

IN THE JORDANIAN DESERT, a corridor of active volcanoes called Harrat Ash Shamah parallels the eastern shore of the Red Sea northward to form the Dead Sea and the deepest valley on Earth. All along this valley are the earthquake-strewn fragments of once-great cities, Crusader fortresses, and sultans' palaces. Sometimes little remains except for faded mosaics or shattered pipes from surprisingly sophisticated plumbing systems. And sometimes, as in the Petra Basin, there is much, much more.

At the northern edge of the Petra Basin, sandstone hills sculpted by sporadic rains into flattened versions of Jabba the Hutt tower over the little gray tents of the Bedouin camp. In the evening, footlights mute the colors and deepen the shadows and fissures of the hills to the purring sound of a generator.

A dirt and stone path runs from the camp to Siq al Barrid (the Cool Siq), a narrow canyon that leads to Little Petra. After a short

walk from Little Petra, the path passes the remains of a stone-age village. (Almost nothing is totally lost in the desert. From the top of Masada, in Israel, you can see the remains of Roman Legion camps clearly etched into the desert floor that surrounds the rebels' mountain fortress.)

After the stone-age village, the ancient Nabatean trail known as Wadi Muaysra al Gharbiyy, the middle gorge of the Three Valleys, begins. The trail leads to the ruins of Um Salsaba, then somewhat steeply up the mountain path to the Monastery, from where you can soon see the western edge of the hidden city of Petra below.

That afternoon we had hiked the Wadi Muaysra al Gharbiyy from Little Petra to the Monastery, a far larger and lonelier version of the Treasury, the hollow tomb carved into the iron-rich sandstone of Petra and the memory of anyone who saw Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.

It was dark when we returned to the Bedouin camp and entered the big black tent. Othman had already lit a fire in the wood stove to begin the jaha, the coffee ceremony. The world outside the tent was diminished to shadows, and we could simply be a part of the night and the thousand-year-old ceremony of the jaha until the stars reeled in the desert sky and we could sleep in our tent, knowing that we had finally seen the long-lost city of Petra, by far the oldest and most enigmatic of the New Seven Wonders of the World. . .



www

This article has been excerpted from **Black as Hell, Strong as Death, and Sweet as Love: A Personal Guide to the World's Best Coffee Experiences** Copyright © 2018 by Steven P. Unger and Ruthie Santistevan, currently in prepublication.

VIDEO

The Man Behind the Look - Sharing the Yemen with Michael Mage

Coffee Lovers TV



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My good friend, and designer of the magazine, Michael Mage joins me on the show today - we talk about our experiences with coffee through the years, and enjoy some Yemen by Port of Mokha.

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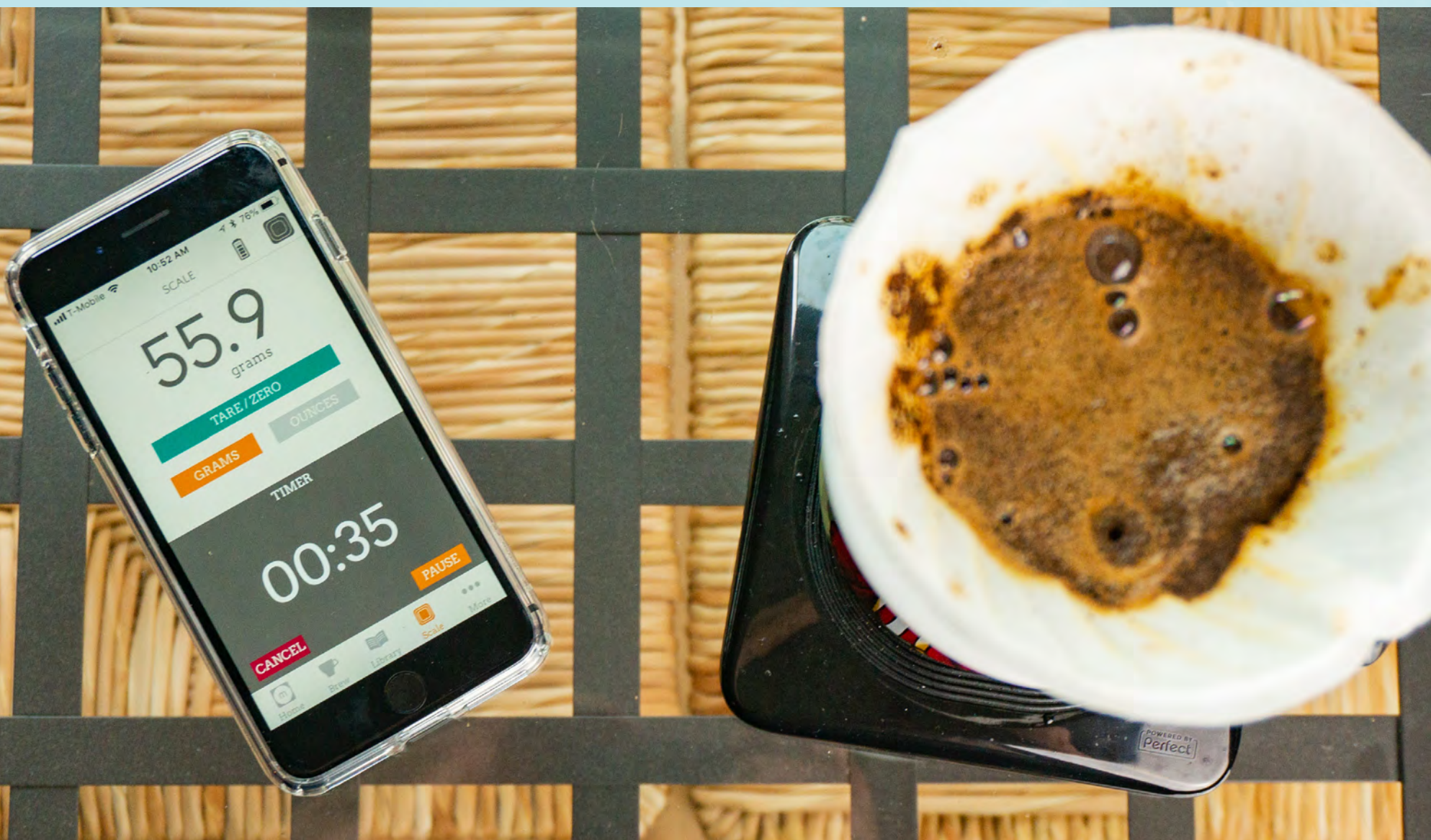
MOCHA



How Important are Brew Times?

IF YOU LOOK UP BREWING GUIDES, most of the time you'll see guidelines telling you to pour certain amounts, then wait for certain times, and that ultimately your total brew time from water touching the coffee should be 3:30 (or whatever variation there is for the brewer).

Many enthusiasts will get super into these guidelines and follow them critically, to the point of marking a brew as a failure if it doesn't hit the desired time (or at least within a reasonably close range).



So you might be wondering, how important are these brew times really? Is it bad if I go over or under?

You've probably noticed in a number of my brewing guide videos, and any other videos where I'm brewing coffee, that I almost always never use a timer.

What Is the Point of the Timer?

Before we dive in further, let's quickly explore the purpose of a timer while brewing coffee.

Extracting coffee - the process of water pulling the soluble compounds out of coffee which gives it the taste and aroma - depends on a number of factors like grind size, water quality, the nature of the coffee itself, but perhaps most importantly the amount of time that the water is in contact with the grounds.

This is the most logical reasoning for using a timer while you brew. Especially if you are interested in tracking the changes in your coffee and instilling consistency into your cup.

Take this example: you have a new Uganda coffee, which when brewed to your ideal specifications on the V60, in a 3:30 brew time, yields a cup that is like soft sweet lemons. You like this, and you want to keep enjoying the coffee this way.



The next day, you brew another cup of the same coffee, using the same grinder settings, the same water, the same pour technique...but this time, your total brew time was 3:50. What happened?

Now, you'll probably notice the change in taste, as the water was in contact with the grounds longer, theoretically, you'll get more coffee extracted into the water, making your cup lean more bitter/astringent.

If you really want to completely replicate your original cup perfectly, then knowing that your brew time went 20 seconds longer will give you some added data (you can surmise from the taste and the time

that the next brew you might want to go slightly coarser or use slightly less coffee).

Two Ways of Looking at Coffee

When it comes to figuring out a brew method or replicating someone else's recipe, I've noticed two approaches or ways of look at the coffee.

The first is with that critical, by the numbers approach. After all, if you can replicate a brewer's numbers precisely, then you should be able to replicate the brew perfectly.

The second is the other side of the same coin. You use the numbers as a basic guideline, but the end result is all about the taste of the coffee.

Naturally, you can see that in an ideal world, you probably use a combination of the two. This is where the art and science of coffee meet.

The Ritual, How Does it All Fit In?

However, I personally lean more towards going by taste. I enjoy the ritual of brewing coffee, and to me, the timer interrupts the ritual (this is probably different for other people).

But most importantly, after brewing a cup of coffee, I'll enjoy it regardless of whether its a perfect

replication of the day before or not. Many times the differences brew to brew are out of your control, and if you are using great overall methods, you are going to be able to taste the nature of the coffee regardless. Taking the example above, we can also ask ourselves a simple question. If we can taste the difference in our brew, and determine what to do base on the taste, do we need the timer? If we can't taste the difference (or don't care), then does the timer really matter?

Enjoying the entire process from making to drinking the coffee is the most important thing for me, and I say if a timer gets in the way of that, then don't worry about it.



The Exception

The major exception to all this is when you are trying to learn and master a brewing method. Yes, you can start off with basic guidelines that don't use a timer, but if you want to discover and change the nuances of every aspect of your brew, then more data is always better.



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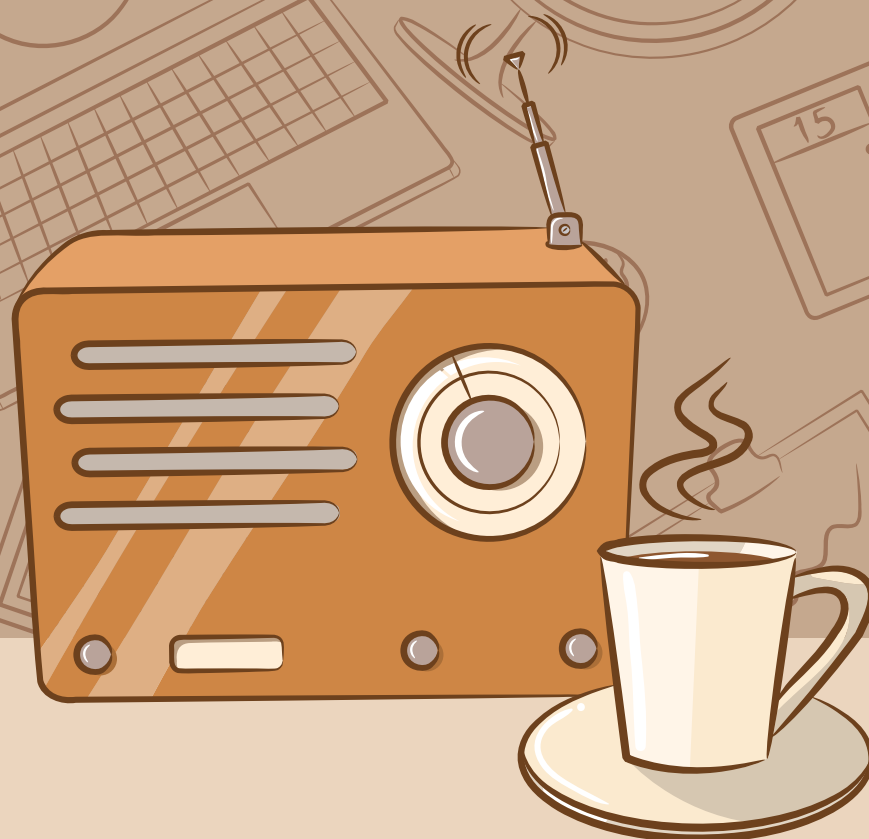
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COFFEE LOVERS RADIO

How to Know When You're a Coffee Nerd



E98 - HOW TO KNOW WHEN YOU'RE A COFFEE NERD

With a lot of fun things happening in Coffee Lovers Radio world - as we approach our 100th episode - Jesse and Joseph thought it would be fun to talk about what really makes someone a coffee nerd. Hint: there's more than just enjoying great coffee, but that's a great start ;)

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HOSTS

Joseph Robertson - Coffee Lovers Magazine - www.coffeeloversmag.com

Jesse Nelson - Conduit Coffee - www.conduitcoffee.com

THE LANGUAGE OF COFFEE

Natural, washed, honey, pulp natural, sun-dried natural...

These are terms used to describe the processing of coffee, and which show up on bags of roasted coffee quite frequently. These are also terms which usually mean nothing until you understand exactly what they mean. They are also terms which are used to varying degrees to manipulate perception through various forms of marketing.

Being that I write and publish this magazine all about coffee, I am hyper-aware of all the marketing that is used by various companies out in the world of coffee in order to sell what they have.

There are two reasons I chose to feature the article giving perspective to Natural vs Washed coffees.

The first is that I very frequently run into the question of what these terms mean - most specifically what the difference is between the two. Again, if you don't know how coffee is processed, then the terms 'natural' and 'washed' on a bag of roasted coffee will mean nothing to you.

Recently at the CoffeeCon coffee festival show in Seattle, I showcased three coffees, two of which were washed, and one of which was a natural processed coffee. This is a great time to explain the difference between the two, because the washed processed coffees tasting is more subtle but more



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Coffee Type?**

Take our Coffee Quiz

complex, while the natural hits you in the face but is pretty straightforward (and you can see this in person very easily).

The challenge in explaining the difference through the packaging brings me to the second reason I decided to dive into the subject...

There has been a growing prevalence in using the term 'Sundried' to make the coffee sound more special, or more interesting/delicious/unique, than other coffees. There are companies making a distinction between natural process and 'sundried' or 'natural sundried.'

In reality, at points through coffee processing, all coffee is dried in the sun. Even washed coffees spend time in the sun - after all the fruit and layers on the pit are removed, the green coffee needs to dry down to a certain level of moisture, and that takes a certain amount of time in the sun. Naturally processed coffee - drying coffee in the sun - is the oldest, and most prevalent method for processing coffee because it uses the least amount of resources.

The term 'sundried' is typically being used to describe naturally processed coffees, and in such a way that it comes off sounding new, advanced, or special in one way or another.

I'm delving a little bit into a tangential subject here because the warping of coffee terms for the marketing benefit of

individual companies is one of my greatest pet peeves in the coffee industry. It always sets back the industry because it inevitably causes confusion for consumers, and it's always only ever done for the benefit of the businesses selling coffee.

I'm going to leave the subject of how coffee is marketed to another time...

The point for this issue is to give you the understanding that coffee processing is basic on a broad scale - getting that pit out of the fruit and doing so in a way that translates as much flavor as is intended by the producer. This is either done by letting the fruit dry (on beds in the sun), or by washing away the fruit and layers (and then letting it dry), or some variation of the two.





This Month in Coffee

August 2018

Colombia's Coffee Is In Danger. These Scientists Are Fighting to Save It

Colombia (and many other coffee growing regions) are running into the challenges of climate change plus relatively genetically homogenized coffee varieties. Much research and work will be necessary to keep great tasting coffee growing over the next 50 years.

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Add a Little Lemon Oil to Your Coffee

Do you like to experiment with your coffee beverages? This one is fun, and can be a great way to enhance the natural flavor of coffee.

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The German Entrepreneur Who Took The Clump Out of Coffee

The story of Melitta Bentz, who invented the Melitta Dripper in the early 1900s.

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A Drink For The Devil: 8 Facts About The History of Coffee

Coffee history is always fun and interesting - though much of this is based on myth, so take it with a grain of salt.

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The Sound of Science - "Coffee"

This is a pretty cool short 2 minute podcast style clip about coffee, and why it tastes the way it does.

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