



NAVIGATING ORIGINS

Peru

Coffee Characteristics

The majority of Peru's coffee is typica, accounting for 35 percent, while 25 percent is bourbon. Newer coffees include caturra and catimor.

Peruvian coffee is best known for its mellow body, lightly floral acidity, and crisp, clean finish. But the taste and quality of Peruvian coffee can vary widely, says K.C. O'Keefe, founder and co-owner of Jungle Tech, a Peruvian coffee import company.

"Trying to pin down Peruvian coffee is almost impossible," O'Keefe says. "It's still a wild country of origin in that there's not too much consistency on a national level of the coffee."

Because Peru is such a large country, covering over half of the size of Central America, there are many different types of coffee. "That's a lot of room and a lot of difference," says O'Keefe. "That's another reason why trying to classify Peruvian as a whole is very difficult."



Several cooperatives and private buyers have found excellent micro-lots from the high altitude valley called Divisoria in the mountainous region outside of Tingo Maria.

The coffee exhibits a character that is difficult to find elsewhere, says George Howell, owner of GHH Select, a coffee supplier and roaster. "It is reminiscent of sugar cane, melon and sweet caramel," Howell says of the coffee's unique flavor. Howell believes it is a combination of the high altitude and the great care that is taken to pick perfectly ripe cherries that give the coffee its definition.

What to Watch For

One of the downfalls of Peruvian coffee can be the long drying time of the beans. Due to the lack of sunshine in the high altitude cloud forests, beans can sometimes take as long as a month to dry below 15 percent moisture, as compared to the four- to five-day norm of countries like Costa Rica.

Due to the large number of small farmers and the lack of national organizations, coffee is often mixed together prior to export, so it can be difficult to distinguish one coffee from another in export samples.

What's Next

Look for big jumps in improvement from Peruvian coffees in the next few years. "Huge changes are happening in Peru," says O'Keefe. "There's more internal competition in coffee buying as a result of the free market in Peru. It's a very positive change for the farmers, and it's improving the quality of the coffee because price incentives are reaching the farmers."



Capital City Lima

Languages Spanish and Quechuan

Monetary Unit Nuevo Sol (Approx. 3.45 Soles/1 US Dollar)

Population 27.5 Million

Climate Coffee is grown in the tropical jungle on the eastern and northwest slope of the Andes, between 3,000 and 6,000 feet above sea level.

Exports Coffee is the number one legal agricultural product of Peru, and it accounts for more than 30 percent of the entire agricultural income of the country. Peru exports about three million bags of coffee per year, the majority of which is sold to Germany and the United States.

Growing Regions Peru has at least 10 distinct growing regions, including Chanchamayo, Villa Rica, Piura, Quillabamba, and Tingo Maria.

Farms Peru has more than 120,000 small farms, with the majority being 2–2.2 hectares.

Harvest Peru's harvest runs May through September, with the biggest months being June and July. Coffees typically arrive in the states through January.

