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The Coffee Book: Anatomy Of An Industry From Crop To The Last Drop (Bazaar Book)



Synopsis

A freshly updated edition of the best introduction to one of the world's most popular products, The Coffee Book is jammed full of facts, figures, cartoons, and commentary covering coffee from its first use in Ethiopia in the sixth century to the rise of Starbucks and the emergence of Fair Trade coffee in the twenty-first. The book explores the process of cultivation, harvesting, and roasting from bean to cup; surveys the social history of café society from the first coffeehouses in Constantinople to beatnik havens in Berkeley and Greenwich Village; and tells the dramatic tale of high-stakes international trade and speculation for a product that can make or break entire national economies. It also examines the industry's major players, revealing how they have systematically reduced the quality of the bean and turned a much-loved product into a commodity and lifestyle accoutrement, ruining the lives of millions of farmers around the world in the process. Finally, The Coffee Book, hailed as a Best Business Book by Library Journal when it was first published, considers the exploitation of labor and damage to the environment that mass cultivation causes, and explores the growing "conscious coffee" market and Fair Trade movement.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This was a fascinating book. A very good overview of coffee from its beginnings to the present, and a real eye-opener on its effect on world economy and politics over the centuries. I was especially interested in the sections on ecology and marketing, and found it to be very well researched and

complete, yet written in a very catchy way. The illustrations and sidebar notes included fit in nicely. Perfect to accompany "un tinto", as they say in Colombia.

I agree with most of the comments in the other reviews. One thing I will add is that this is a more concise book than "UNCOMMON GROUNDS", but has much of the same information, from a different viewpoint of course. It is also around 6 years more up to date. For instance in "UNCOMMON GROUNDS" Vietnam was just starting to make a mark in the coffee industry, now it's one of the top producers of Robusta beans. Also the Fair Trade / Bird Friendly etc. coffee is more common now. Information will be found on the various aspects of coffee, such as Starbucks, instant, caffeine-decaf, specialty coffee, which turned the industry around (if not on its head). There are sidebars of some of the major players such as Kraft, P & G, etc. The authors also dealt with coffee advertising which was a significant part of coffee history during the 20th century. Whatever one thinks of the commercials or the coffee, Mrs. Olsen & Juan Valdez became stars. One interesting quote they reported had to do with why the ad-industry put out certain of the ads they did during the 50-60's such as some from CHOCK-FULL-OF-NUTS & CHASE AND SANBORN. The people behind those ads said that they did it on purpose - they figured that the women went through the same thing in real life. Imagine the ad agencies trying to get away with some of those ads today. So, if you are interested in the history of coffee but don't have the time for the 400+ pages found in "UNCOMMON GROUNDS" (also reviewed), this is the book to read. Of course it would be hard to beat the cover.

Mr. Dicum and Ms. Luttinger have written a phenomenal book. From their obscure historical facts to their pinpointing the origin of coffee, 6th century Ethiopia, you will be riveted to your seat as if you were reading a fictional novel. They put coffee, the coffee industry, and global coffee politics under a microscope and often times it fails to hold up to the scrutiny. No matter what your political affiliation is you can't help but be immediately shocked and awed and the incredible amount of sociopolitical machinations that go on for you to have that morning sip of java. For 11 years I have been a futures investor, broker, and author. One of the preferred futures contracts that I trade is coffee. This book has provided me with an in-depth background and perspective on coffee that I never had before. This is now one of my reference books. For those that are interested in investing in coffee either actual grounds or in futures this book is for you and for those that can go a day without the original "liquid gold" you have got to read it. At the end of the day you will appreciate that Starbucks' "venti mocha grande" just a little bit more.

I never knew the extent of coffee on the economy until I read this book. Not only did it include statistics and graphs, it also included little pictures and quotations that were insightful. I learned about the process of coffee harvesting, roasting, blending and the marketing of it in the U.S. Also there were quirky and cool little facts on coffee's impact on our history. I mean, who knew that the Green Dragon coffeehouse in Boston and Merchant's coffeehouse in New York became meeting houses for the angry American colonists who planned and protested against imported British goods in the midst of the Boston Tea Party?? Overall a good and enjoyable book!

Informative, although the author seems to have an ideological problem with big business. You can almost hear the disgust every time that she talks about "international corporations." Nevertheless, provided the general information that I was looking for about the product and the industry.

This is a must read for anyone who works with or loves drinking coffee. If you're looking for a crash course in the history, economics behind or current politics of the coffee industry, look no further!

Very informative on the history and business of coffee. Certainly the author has prejudices (decaf is "vile"), but other assertions (ie grocery store coffee is swill) are backed up with info about how commodification and technification (ruination) of the product causes its decline, and some direction on finding a better product, both in taste and social conscious. I'm no coffee snob, but I do recognize a lousy cuppa joe when I meet it, so it is helpful to at least know what/how to avoid, and what to look for to hedge your bets to something more satisfying without paying designer prices.

I picked this book up at the library, thinking it was about kinds of coffee and how to brew it. I was mildly disappointed to find out that it was about the coffee industry, but I read every word. If you want to know how to minimize ecological damage in choosing your coffee, here's where to find out. The history was also fascinating. A great read!

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