

MOCHA in Arabian.



YEMENI COFFEE (MOCHA) HISTORY

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DAY 3rd MARCH



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The coffee tree was discovered in Yemen among the rare trees and the environment of the Yemeni nature. Yet, there is no exact date determining when Yemenis started planting coffee tree and getting attracted to its tempting berries. It is probably that they started planting it in ancient Yemen during the Sheba Kingdom in the first millennium BC when the geographical contour of Sheba spread from Arabia Peninsula to East Africa.

The coffee tree was originally found in the lands of Sheba, nowadays Yemen, and its natural and historical range covered the Arabian Peninsula hills and the lands of Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia). This is where the dispute arises among experts regarding the origin of coffee: was it in Yemen or in Abyssinia? Nevertheless, this quarrel is purely nominal, since the coffee tree came within the boundaries of the Yemeni ancient Kingdom of Sheba.

Yemenis have always used coffee, and in times gone by, what we know of the correct way of using coffee, after roasting it, is no more than 1000 years. Different uses were probably known than those of today, for instance, in the renowned Yemeni herbal medicinal industry as well as in perfumery. The venues serving Yemeni coffee were previously called “Maqhaiah”; however, lately, they are called “Maqha” and the plural of the name becomes “Maqahi” Consequently, the name has been globalized.

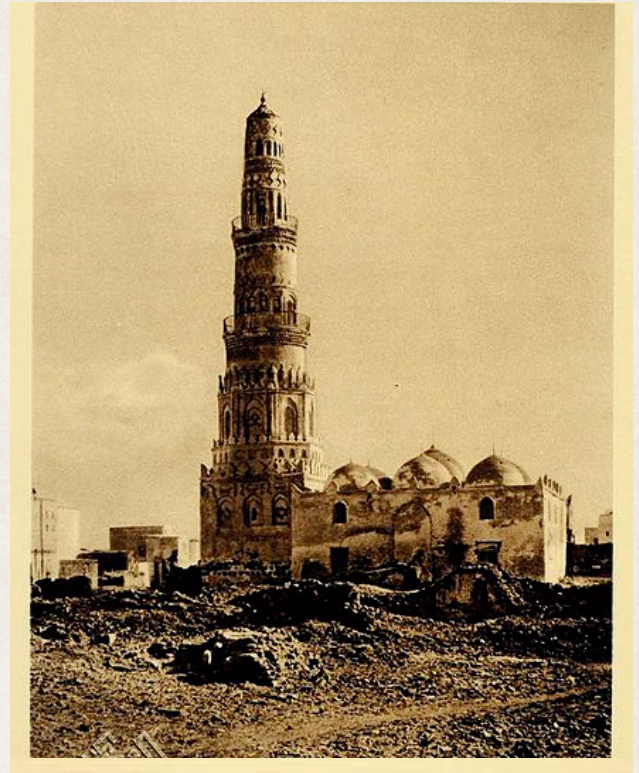




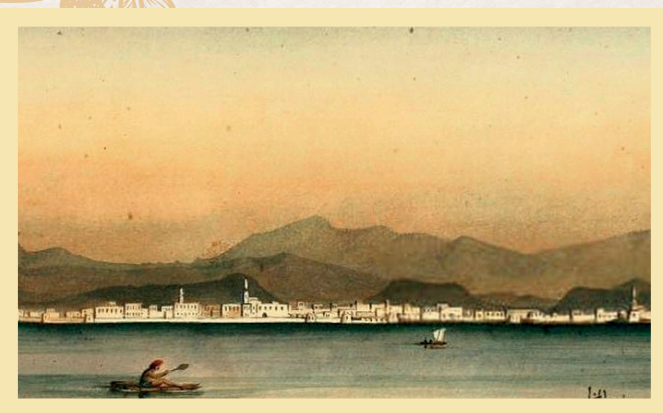
The term (Qahwa) was in the beginning used for wine, according to Arabic dictionaries, and it also highlighted other beverages such as milk. It was a characteristic associated with affluent individuals who consumed beverages extensively at home during that ancient era. Nowadays in Yemen, Qahwa means drinking tea, coffee (Bonn), coffee husks “Qishr”, and also other kinds of hot beverages like ginger. It is erroneous to consider the word "Qahwa" as a derivative from the Turkish word "Kahveh" which translates into Italian as "caffè" and into English as "coffee". The root for the word Qahwah does not exist in Turkish or other languages but in Yemeni Arabic.

Some try to denationalize coffee from its Yemeni identity by calling it Arabia coffee. However, the right term is Yemeni coffee as it is exclusively Yemeni. Yemen is not just the Republic of Yemen known today, it extended within the boundaries of the ancient Yemeni kingdoms: Ma'in, Sheba, Awsan, Himyar and the whole Arabian Peninsula and East Africa. Therefore, coffee, epitomized by (Bonn), is a solely Yemenite product. Migration of Yemenis introduced it into the Greater Yemen and other regions of the Arab world

It cannot be merely meted out to the modern states, particularly those that formed the backbone of the Yemeni civilizations and successive states. When we say that the coffee is a "wine of the clouds," we are saying that referring to coffee indigenous to Yemeni massifs which are touching the cloud



Masjed Alshadhili (Mocha 1926)



Mokha or mocha. History drawing from 1836 AD, the first for Bandar al- Mukha, a city full of houses and minarets, all in white

Coffee consumption came to be linked with the rituals of the Yemeni Sufi denomination affiliated to the Shadhiliyya order, founded in Al-Makha (Mocha) by Ali bin Umar bin Ibrahim Al-Shadhili. They became famous of using coffee to aid their followers to stay awake and perform nighttime worship. During his visits to Egypt and Levant, Alshadhili promoted the use of coffee, subsequently known as “Shadhiliyya Coffee”.



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The widespread of coffee from Al Makha in Yemen to Mecca, Medina, Egypt, Levant, and Istanbul starting 14th and 15th centuries AD led to a legislation debate. While some jurists considered it prohibited, the Islamic consensus rejected prohibiting it and considered it halal.

Coffee tree was unfamiliar among Europeans till the 16th century, initially distinguished for its medicinal uses. In 1573, German physician, botanist and traveler Leonhard Rauwolf recorded his observations of coffee during his trips through some Arab regions. He described coffee as "a very good drink they call Chaube that is almost as black as ink and very good in illness, especially of the stomach. This they drink in the morning early in open places before everybody, without any fear or regard, out of porcelain cups, as hot as they can, sipping it a little at a time".

In the 16th century, Ottomans transported coffee from Al-Makha to Europe and beyond. At that juncture, coffee evolved into a highly sought-after commodity in numerous countries. Colonial powers facilitated the distribution of Yemeni coffee seedlings to various parts of the world, with the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, and British transporting them to their colonies. The Portuguese introduced coffee plantations to Brazil, subsequently transferred by the Spaniards to Central America. The Dutch transported coffee plants to Indonesia, Sumatra, and Sri Lanka, while the French exported coffee seedlings to the Caribbean.



Arabica



Robusta





Globally, coffee is classified into two main types. The first, Arabica, unequivocally represents Yemeni coffee. The second, Robusta, hails from Ethiopia. Both Arabica and Robusta originate from Yemen, the land of Sheba.

Coffee has become a global phenomenon, savored by countless early risers who relish its enchanting aroma. International companies compete for dominance in both marketing and presentation, offering an array of flavors to accommodate diverse consumer preferences. Yemeni coffee retains its authenticity compared to other regions. Experts define its unique taste as earthy, with an aromatic scent and a flavor reminiscent of chocolate. Therefore, in other countries, café proprietors add chocolate to coffee, calling it "Mocha," in an attempt to capturing the genuine essence and distinctive flavor of Yemeni coffee.

Some coffee production companies worldwide intentionally seek to mitigate the bitterness of coffee. To achieve that, they feed coffee berries to some animals like civets and elephants or birds like Guans, also known as Jacu birds. Elephants, civets and Guans ingest coffee berries with their husks and defecate them after digestion, producing husk-free beans. These collected animal defecations undergo several stages of separating, washing, drying out and purifying before being sorted for roasting. Due to the considerable time and effort involved, this type of coffee is expensive.





In that regard, Yemeni coffee, renowned for its sweet flavor, does not require such complex procedures. Yemen's unique topography, fertile soil, and climatic diversity have established it as the cradle of coffee production. Despite Yemeni coffee seedlings being distributed across the globe, new cultivation areas lack Yemen's distinctive environment and weather patterns.

In Yemen, coffee berries are husked before exportation. Historically, pure coffee beans have been exported for two primary reasons: firstly, to prevent coffee replanting outside Yemen, thereby maintaining Yemen's dominance in coffee cultivation and global exportation. Secondly, farmers earn significant income by selling high-quality, pure coffee beans. As for husks, they are consumed locally, serving an exclusively economic purpose.



Renzo Manzoni, an Italian traveler, pointed out during his visit to Yemen in 1877-1878 in his book "Yemen: A Journey to Sana'a" the Yemenis' practice of locally consuming coffee husks and exporting pure coffee beans globally.

Yemeni coffee conveys a message to the world on behalf of Yemenis, symbolizing notions of peace, love, and a unique flavor. Yemen stands as the birthplace of coffee, trade, and the historical link between East and West.





YEMEN

Some of the most interesting Arabicas in the world grow in Yemen, with "wild" flavors of spice, earth, fruits, and tobacco.

Coffee grew in Yemen long before it reached any other country outside of Africa. The small town of Mocha was the first port to establish commercial export.

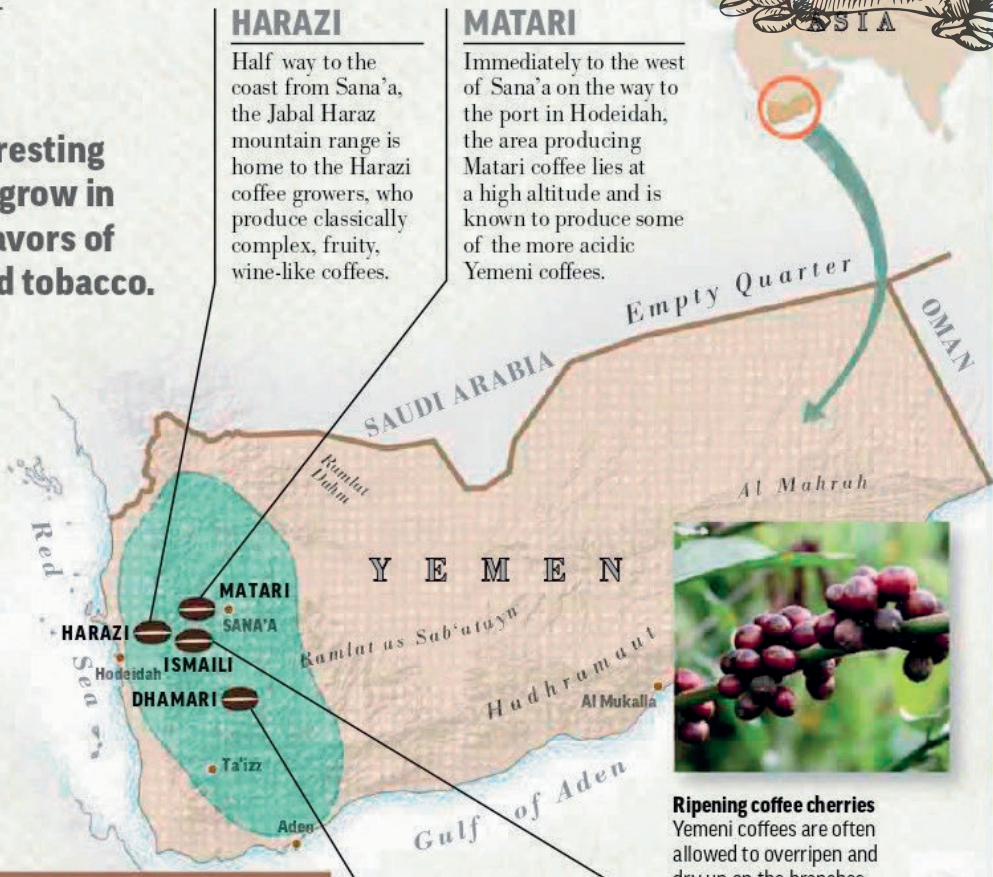
Coffee still grows wild in some places, but the main cultivated areas grow old Typica and old Ethiopian strains. Varieties often share the same name as regions, making it difficult to trace and identify them.

HARAZI

Half way to the coast from Sana'a, the Jabal Haraz mountain range is home to the Harazi coffee growers, who produce classically complex, fruity, wine-like coffees.

MATARI

Immediately to the west of Sana'a on the way to the port in Hodeidah, the area producing Matori coffee lies at a high altitude and is known to produce some of the more acidic Yemeni coffees.



Ripening coffee cherries
Yemeni coffees are often allowed to overripen and dry up on the branches.

YEMENI COFFEE KEY FACTS

PERCENTAGE OF WORLD MARKET: **0.1%**

MAIN TYPES: **ARABICA**
TYPICA, HEIRLOOM

HARVEST: **JUNE-DECEMBER**

PROCESS: **NATURAL**



WORLD RANKING AS A PRODUCER: **33RD LARGEST PRODUCER**

DHAMARI

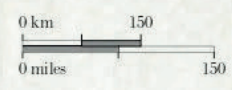
South of Sana'a, the western districts of the Dhamar governorate produce coffees that have classic Yemeni traits, but are often softer and rounder than the western coffees.

ISMAILI

Named after a group of Muslims that settled in the area around Hutayb, Ismaili is both the name of a local variety and the general area, producing some of the more rustic Yemeni coffees.



Natural Heirloom
Unknown Heirloom varieties are naturally processed here, adding a unique local character.



KEY

- NOTABLE COFFEE-PRODUCING REGIONS
- AREA OF PRODUCTION





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Yemenyoon Media and Culture: A cultural institution concerned with Yemeni cultural affairs, seeking to reinforce the Yemeni identity and manifest its richness and authenticity. We are committed to bolster the Yemeni presence, elevate its positive image of fostering peace on the global stage. Our belief is that Yemen has historically served as a vital economic and cultural bridge between the East and the West, a legacy we strive to maintain and enhance.



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