

COFFEE

I love the smell and taste of coffee. Coffee is one of those items that has grown on me through the years and will probably continue for some time...it's a simple pleasure!



Coffee shops have continued to rise in popularity ranging from the bookstore shops to the stand-alones such as Starbucks. To give some measure of this growth, the trade of coffee is second only to petroleum in terms of dollars traded worldwide. It's time for a history lesson.

Coffee was first discovered in Eastern Africa in an area we know today as Ethiopia. In the 1700's, coffee found its way to the Americas by means of a French infantry captain who nurtured one small plant on its long journey across the Atlantic. Coffee was declared the national drink of the then colonized United States by the Continental Congress- this was in protest of the excessive tax on tea levied by the British crown.

While living in Savannah Georgia in the late 1980's, I became familiar with the coffee derivative, Espresso. Italians at my work place preferred this high-powered coffee in small cups - it's a good thing, since the stuff really packs a punch. The Italians perfected this wonderful machine and were the first to manufacture it. Espresso has become such an integral part of Italian life and culture with over 200,000 espresso bars in Italy.

Coffee comes in a host of flavors and types but, for most, coffee is purchased as beans or grounds, and brewed in an automatic-drip coffee maker. Making coffee has become easy since the days of my childhood when coffee was brewed in a percolator. Still, the old way of brewing coffee did not slow down my dad {your grandfather} – he would drink the stuff by the gallons!

Much, if not all, of our coffee is grown in Central and South America - where, the coffee plant/bean requires the type of climate. Beans are dried and roasted before being shipped to plants such as Maxwell House in Jacksonville; "Ah", that processing plant issues a pleasant fragrance unlike other industry such as paper processing.

Aroma, acidity, body and flavor measure the quality of coffee; but I am not that particular about these qualities but simply, a cup or two in the morning to start the day. Matter-of-fact, I am enjoying a cup this morning as I write this letter.

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