



What is Specialty Coffee?

Only the Best of the Best

There are two main varieties of coffee:

Robusta Coffee is grown in the tropics and subtropics at lower elevations in valleys and even down to the waterfront. This type of plant produces twice as much coffee cherries than the Arabica varietal and it is more disease resistant and generally heartier. Those are the positives. It has almost double the caffeine of Arabica coffee which makes it more bitter and also comes with a very natural bitter and often dirty taste. Because of its high yield and hearty nature it is often the primary coffee used by the largest coffee manufacturing companies in the world including Nestle, Philip Morris, Kraft and Proctor & Gamble for brands like Folgers and Maxwell House.

Arabica Coffee is grown in the tropics at elevations of 3,000-6,000 ft. with an average annual rainfall of 80", and average temperatures of 75 degrees year round. It is much more susceptible to disease and is very affected by soil and air quality. That way even as minute as different coffee estates on different hills in the same region of the country can produce very different flavored coffee.

All coffee is graded 1 (being best quality) to 7 (being worst quality) As it is picked and processed it can be sorted up to 8-10 times before it is roasted for use, which divides the coffee into these different grades. One can find grade 4-5 Arabica or Robusta coffee being sold at the average gas station or super market or the big four chains mentioned above.

Specialty Coffee is defined as Grade 1 Arabica, and is usually distinguished and labeled by the estate, region, processing technique, and country of origin. This coffee makes up 1% of all coffee harvested and processed in the world. This is the only type of coffee that would be used in Specialty Coffee shops and Micro-Roasters like Standing Stone Coffee Company.