The History of Coffee

According to the legend...

Coffee was discovered in the ninth century by an Ethiopian goat farmer named Kaldi. The farmer noticed that his goats behaved oddly, frolicking around as if full of energy, after eating the berries of the coffee plant.



According to the legend...

Kaldi tried a berry himself and, experiencing the energising effects of the caffeine in the berries, took some to a nearby monastery. The sceptical monks threw them into the fire, but the pleasant scent persuaded them to give them another try, grinding the beans and mixing them with hot water to produce what we know as coffee.



Arabica coffee is still Ethiopia's main export today.



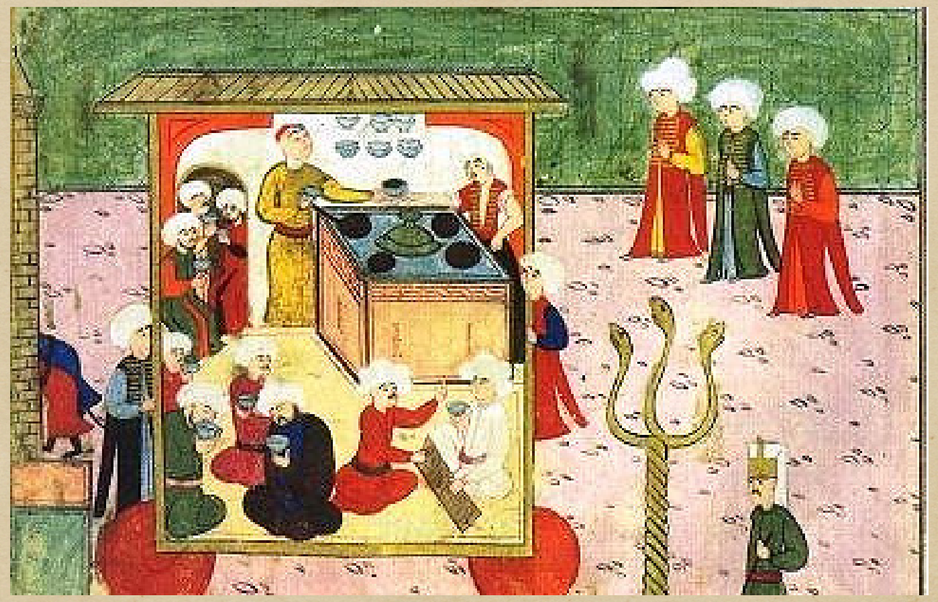
From Ethopia to Yemen...

Coffee was originally exported from Ethiopia to Yemen by Somali merchants, via the port of Mocha which gives its name to Mocha coffee. Sufis in Yemen used it to aid concentration.



...and to the Levant

In the sixteenth century, coffee spread to the Levant, with coffee houses opening up in Egypt, Syria and Constantinople. It became particularly associated with Islamic culture and society.



Coffee spreads worldwide

Despite some attempts to ban coffee, it spread to Italy later in the sixteenth century, and from there to the rest of Europe. The first mainland European coffee house opened in Venice in 1645. Over the next century, coffee plants were transported to the East Indies and the Americas.



Coffee in Britain

The first coffee house in England opened in 1650, in the city of Oxford, shortly followed by several in London, including that in St Michael's Alley in Cornhill, whose proprietor was a servant of a trader in Turkish goods. Coffee also arrived through the British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company. By 1675, there were more than 3,000 coffee houses in England, and during the Enlightenment they became hotbeds of political and religious debate - so much so that Charles II made an attempt to destroy them.



Coffee Today

For most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Brazil was the biggest producer of coffee, largely owing to the use of slave labour. During the twentieth century, other countries began to produce significant amounts of coffee, including Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Issues surrounding the ethical production, trade and consumption of coffee still remain.

TOP 10 COFFEE PRODUCING COUNTRIES



Country Ranking (in tonnes) - **2022 to 2023**

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
BRAZIL	VIETNAM	INDONESIA	COLOMBIA	ETHIOPIA	UGANDA	INDIA	HONDURAS	MEXICO	PERU
4,131,600	1,963,500	782,100	745,800	545,820	433,290	430,320	356,400	269,874	239,250