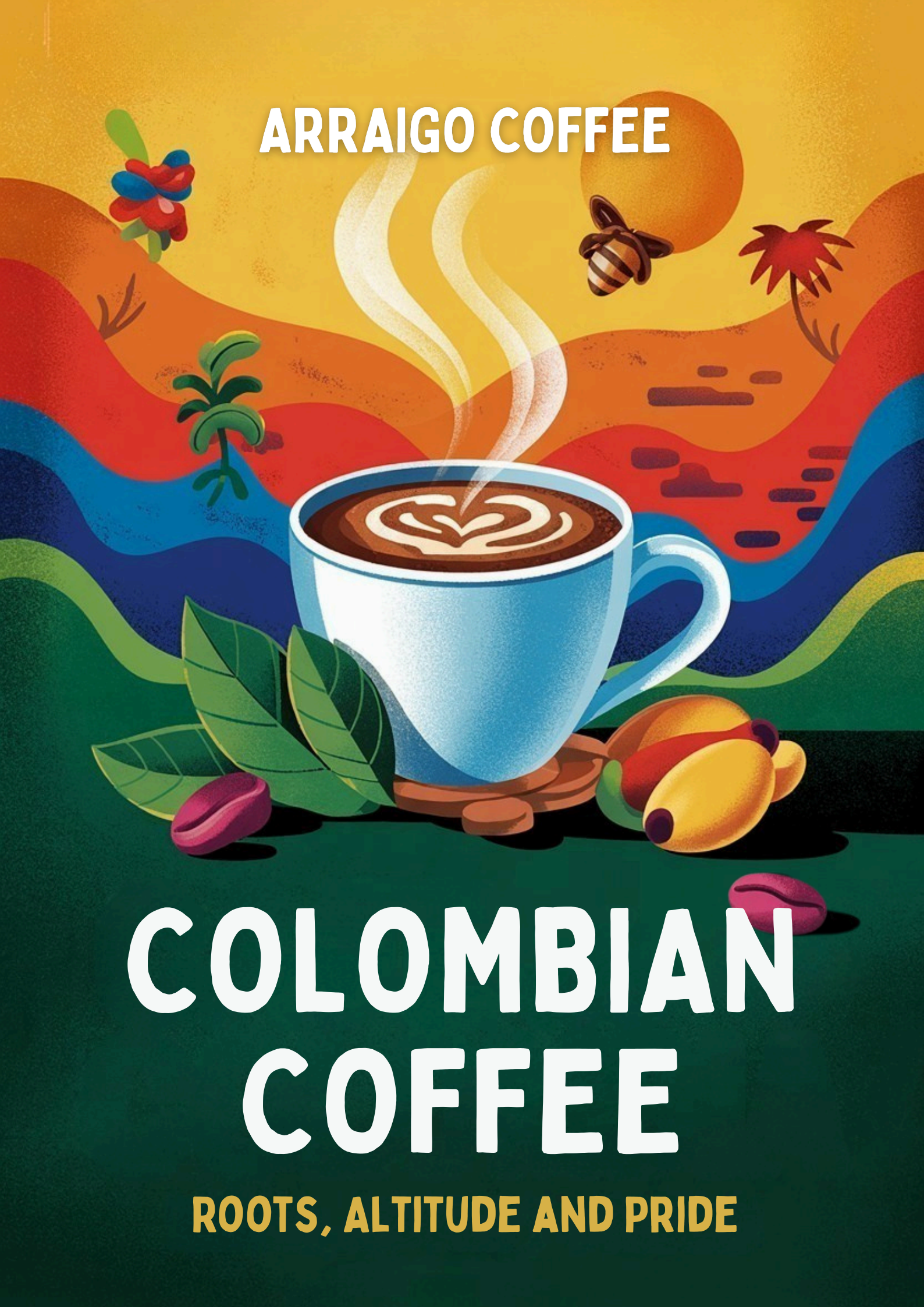
ARRAIGO COFFEE



COLOMBIAN COFFEE

ROOTS, ALTITUDE AND PRIDE

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This book was created by Arraigo Coffee as a celebration of Colombia's coffee-growing heritage.

Arraigo Coffee — Coffee with roots, flavour with history.

2025

Introduction

Colombian coffee is far more than just a beverage. It is a living expression of an entire nation. Within every bean lies the story of generations, the whisper of the Andean mountains, the patience of coffee growers, and the richness of a geography that renders it truly unique. This book is a deep journey along the pathways that connect coffee to the soul of Colombia. From the steep slopes of the Andes where the bean begins to grow, to international tables where it is sipped with awe and admiration, we shall explore why this coffee has captured the world's heart.

With a well-researched, respectful and passionately written approach, this work seeks not only to describe the Colombian coffee process, but to honour those who cultivate it and uphold it as a cultural heritage. Join us in discovering how geography, tradition and excellence transform a single coffee bean into an ambassador of national identity.

Chapter 1

The Land of Origin: Geography, Climate and Cultivation

Colombian coffee is the result of a unique combination of geographical, climatic and agricultural factors that are difficult to replicate elsewhere in the world. Colombia is located within the coffee belt of the planet, between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, which provides it with ideal conditions for growing Arabica coffee — considered the highest quality variety.

The country's geography is defined by its mountainous terrain. The Andes mountain range divides into three branches that run from south to north: the Western, Central and Eastern Cordilleras. These mountains, with their valleys and slopes, offer optimal altitudes — between 1,200 and 2,000 metres above sea level — for cultivating high-grown coffee, a key factor in the bean's aromatic complexity and flavour.

Temperatures in coffee-growing regions range between 17°C and 23°C throughout the year, allowing the flowering and ripening of the coffee cherry to occur gradually. This slow maturation concentrates sugars in the fruit and contributes to a more balanced cup. Added to this is a well-distributed rainfall pattern that supports two harvests per year: the main harvest and the "mitaca" (a secondary crop).

Volcanic soil is another critical element. Rich in minerals and with excellent drainage, this type of earth nourishes coffee plants and adds to the sensory profile of Colombian beans. Regions such as Caldas, Tolima, Huila, Antioquia and Nariño are especially renowned for their diverse microclimates, which allow for production of beans with distinctive flavour notes from zone to zone.

Colombian coffee cultivation is predominantly manual. From the sowing of seeds in nurseries, their transfer to the final fields, pest and weed control without excessive use of chemicals, to the hand-picking of cherries at their exact point of ripeness — every step is carried out with artisan care. This meticulous approach guarantees consistent quality and ensures that only the best beans progress to the next stage.
In summary, Colombian coffee is born in a privileged natural setting, nurtured by expert hands that honour the rhythm of the land. This intimate connection between geography, climate and agricultural practice forms the foundation upon which the global reputation of Colombian coffee is built.

Chapter 2

Coffee Culture: History, Tradition and Human Legacy

The history of coffee in Colombia dates back to the 18th century, when it is believed to have been introduced by Jesuit missionaries in the eastern part of the country. However, it wasn't until the 19th century that coffee cultivation expanded significantly, becoming a cornerstone of the national economy.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, thousands of rural families found in coffee not just an economic livelihood, but a way of life. Coffee farming became a family enterprise, with every member involved in the production process. This form of organisation allowed knowledge about cultivation and farm management to be passed down through generations.

In 1927, the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia was established — an institution that has played a vital role in strengthening the sector. Through the National Coffee Fund, the federation has supported research, infrastructure, technical education, and international marketing of the product.

Coffee culture goes far beyond economics. It is a shared identity, expressed through language, music, architecture, everyday customs, and regional pride. This rich heritage was recognised in 2011 when UNESCO declared the Colombian

Coffee Cultural Landscape a World Heritage Site, highlighting the harmonious interaction between people, nature, and coffee tradition.

In Colombia's coffee towns, life revolves around the bean. From harvest festivals to conversations in the town square, coffee is ever-present. Colonial houses, cobbled roads, and hillsides covered in coffee plants are testament to a historical symbiosis that has shaped both the landscape and the spirit of the region.

Today, in the face of climate change, rural migration, and globalisation, coffee culture encounters new challenges. Nevertheless, there remains a strong collective commitment to preserve this living tradition. New generations of coffee growers, supported by technology and innovation, are finding ways to carry the legacy forward without losing its essence.

Chapter 3

Why Colombian Coffee is Unique in the World

What makes Colombian coffee unique is not a single factor, but rather the combination of natural conditions, agricultural practices, tradition, and rigorous quality control systems. This blend has positioned Colombian coffee as one of the most recognised and valued in the world.

Firstly, the country has specialised in producing washed Arabica coffee — a process in which the beans are washed with water to achieve greater cleanliness in the cup and to better highlight their sensory notes. This method enhances the bright acidity, floral, fruity and sweet flavours that define Colombian coffee.

Moreover, Colombia is one of the few countries capable of offering fresh coffee year-round, thanks to its diverse geography and climate. This allows exporters to supply markets continuously — a significant competitive advantage. The Colombian Coffee Origin Denomination system, legally established and recognised by the European Union, ensures the authenticity of the product. There is also a rigorous traceability system in place — from farm to cup — which builds trust among international consumers.

Another distinctive feature is the strength of its brand perception. Iconic campaigns such as the creation of the

Juan Valdez character in 1959 have helped Colombian coffee become synonymous with quality, tradition, and origin. This figure has been key to the international positioning strategy, humanising the coffee grower and linking their work to the prestige of the product.

Finally, the standardised practice of selective hand-picking, strict quality controls at collection centres, and various international certifications — such as Rainforest Alliance, UTZ, and Fair Trade — all add value. Many Colombian coffees have also won awards in quality competitions like the Cup of Excellence, which recognises the finest flavour profiles.

In short, Colombian coffee isn't just different — it is exceptional. Its flavour, its story, its people, and its unwavering commitment to excellence make it a global emblem of great coffee.

Chapter 4

From Farm to Cup: The Journey of Colombian Coffee

The journey of Colombian coffee from the branch to the cup is as meticulous as it is fascinating. It is a process made up of multiple stages, shaped by critical decisions, expert hands, and a deep respect for quality. Understanding this journey not only reveals the complexity of the product but also the commitment behind every sip.

1. Sowing and Development of the Coffee Plant

The cycle begins in nurseries, where seeds — typically Arabica varieties such as Caturra, Castillo or Colombia — are carefully planted in nutrient-rich soil bags. There, under partial shade, the seedlings grow for several months before being transplanted into open fields.

Selecting the right terrain and preparing the soil are crucial decisions. Factors such as altitude, drainage, sunlight exposure, and soil type are all considered. In Colombia, these decisions are informed by a blend of inherited wisdom and technical support from institutions like Cenicafé.

2. Maintenance and Agronomic Management

In their early years, coffee plants require intensive care: weed control, pruning, organic or technical fertilisation, and management of pests such as coffee borer beetle and rust

fungus. Many Colombian coffee growers combine traditional knowledge with modern methods, prioritising sustainable practices that preserve the surrounding biodiversity.

Natural shade, provided by native trees, not only protects the coffee plants from direct sunlight but also encourages a healthy ecosystem. This harmonious coexistence between coffee farm and forest is a hallmark of the Colombian coffee landscape.

3. Harvest: Manual Selection at Optimal Ripeness

One of the most distinctive stages of Colombian coffee production is manual harvesting. Unlike countries that rely on mechanical methods, in Colombia, pickers hand-select each cherry at its exact point of ripeness: bright red, free from defects, and fully matured.

This work requires sharp eyes, experience, and patience. More than 2,000 cherries may be needed to produce a single kilogram of coffee. This selectivity has a direct impact on the sensory quality of the final cup.

4. Wet Milling: Depulping, Fermentation and Washing

Once harvested, the cherries are taken to the wet mill, where processing begins. First, they are depulped to remove the outer skin. The beans, still coated in a sugary, sticky mucilage, are then fermented for 12 to 36 hours, depending on climate and altitude.

Fermentation is a natural process that breaks down the mucilage and enhances the aromatic attributes of the coffee. Afterwards, the beans are washed with clean water and prepared for drying.

5. Drying: Sun or Mechanical

Drying can be done traditionally in the sun, using raised drying beds (known as zarandas) or cement patios. In wetter areas or for larger volumes, mechanical dryers or silos are used.

The aim is to reduce the moisture content of the beans to around 10–12%, ensuring preservation without sacrificing quality. Slow, even drying is essential to maintaining the delicate flavours of Colombian coffee.

6. Hulling, Sorting and Quality Control

Once dried, the coffee — still in its parchment layer — is hulled to remove the final protective coating, revealing the green bean. These are then sorted by size, weight, and visible defects using specialised machines and manual inspection.

At collection centres and cooperatives, the beans undergo cupping (sensory evaluation) to determine their profile. Those that meet the highest standards are selected for export or premium markets.

7. Packaging and Export

Selected coffees are packed in jute sacks or special breathable bags. Each lot is logged with full traceability details: farm, region, variety, harvest date, and sensory attributes.

From the ports of Buenaventura, Cartagena or Santa Marta, Colombian coffee sets off for destinations across the Americas, Europe, and Asia — where expert roasters and discerning consumers await a product that has travelled a flawless path.

8. Roasting, Grinding and Brewing

The final destination of the green bean is the roastery, where it is transformed into drinkable coffee. Roasting is both an art and a science — this is where the flavours cultivated, fermented and dried with such care come to life. A skilled Colombian roaster can highlight notes of caramel, panela (unrefined cane sugar), citrus or jasmine.

The coffee is then ground according to the chosen brewing method (espresso, French press, pour-over, etc.) and finally reaches the cup. Every step beyond the farm — roasting, grinding and preparation — has the potential either to honour or to undermine all the previous effort.

A Chain of Care that Transcends the Product

The journey of Colombian coffee is a testament to the dedication of an entire value chain — from farmer to barista. Every stage is shaped by ethical, technical and cultural decisions. This traceability and transparency is not only a guarantee of quality — it is an act of respect for those who produce and those who savour the coffee.

Capítulo 5

The Future of Colombian Coffee: Challenges, Innovation and Sustainability

Colombian coffee, a symbol of national pride and an ambassador of the country abroad, now faces a series of complex challenges that demand adaptability, innovation and collective commitment. In a world undergoing rapid change, Colombia's coffee sector stands at a crucial crossroads — one that will define its future sustainability.

One of the most pressing issues is climate change. Shifts in temperature, increased extreme rainfall or prolonged droughts, and the spread of pests such as leaf rust and the coffee borer beetle are disrupting growing cycles and affecting productivity. Traditional coffee regions have seen reduced yields, while areas at higher altitudes are becoming newly suitable for cultivation. This new reality calls for ongoing research into resilient varieties and agricultural practices tailored to changing conditions.

Added to this is the generational crisis in the countryside. Many young coffee growers are migrating to cities in search of better opportunities, leaving behind a gap in generational continuity. Attracting the interest of younger generations means offering a renewed vision of rural life — one that

includes digital tools, access to technical education, and business models that combine innovation, profitability and purpose.

Production costs, meanwhile, continue to rise, while international coffee prices fluctuate frequently, impacting the economic stability of thousands of producers. In response, there is a growing trend towards high-quality, speciality coffee. Here, added value — through differentiated processes, certifications, and direct marketing — enables better income. Farms focusing on micro-lots, controlled fermentations or single-origin coffees are gaining a foothold in niche markets willing to pay for traceability and excellence.

Environmental and social sustainability has also become a key pillar. Increasingly, consumers seek out responsible products, and Colombian coffee has responded with initiatives that promote good agricultural practices, ecosystem conservation, gender equity and community well-being. Certifications such as Rainforest Alliance, Fair Trade and organic are not merely market labels — they are real commitments to a production model that respects both the environment and the people involved.

Digital transformation is ushering in a new era for Colombian coffee. From apps that allow growers to monitor their crops, to platforms that directly connect producers with roasters and consumers, technology is shortening the value chain and

opening up new opportunities. This shift is particularly vital for smallholders, who now have access to knowledge, training, and markets that were once out of reach.

The international market, for its part, presents a paradox: while competition grows from speciality coffees from Africa, Asia and Central America, so too does demand for authentic products with a clear origin and story. In this landscape, Colombian coffee holds a key advantage: its global reputation, its protected origin status, and the strength of a well-established national brand. The challenge lies in maintaining quality, communicating the human effort behind every cup, and diversifying distribution channels — including e-commerce and direct international sales.

Lastly, educating consumers presents a tremendous opportunity. Many coffee drinkers are still unaware of the sensory richness, history and effort behind Colombian coffee. Initiatives such as tastings, immersive experiences, rural tourism and digital content help forge an emotional connection with the public and strengthen the bond between producer and consumer.

In conclusion, the future of Colombian coffee will depend on its ability to adapt, to innovate and to remain true to its roots. The challenges are real — but so too are the passion of its growers, the strength of its culture, and the prestige earned

over more than a century. With vision and collective effort, Colombian coffee will continue to be a banner of quality, sustainability and national pride for generations to come.

Sources Consulted and References

This book was written based on the knowledge and experience of the Arraigo Coffee team, complemented by documented information from reliable sources in the public domain. Below are some of the reference sources used to support and enrich the content:

- National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia. (n.d.). www.federaciondecafeteros.org
- Cenicafé – National Coffee Research Center. (n.d.). www.cenicafe.org
- UNESCO. (2011). Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia. Sources Consulted and References
- International Coffee Organization. (n.d.). www.ico.org
- Various academic articles and public data related to Colombian coffee cultivation and export.

Creation Signature

This book was conceived, researched and written by the team behind Arraigo Coffee, as a tribute to the coffee-growing roots that inspire and define us. Every page reflects our commitment to truth, quality, and the passion that lies within Colombian coffee.

Arraigo Coffee — Coffee with roots, flavour with history.

Epilogue

To speak of Colombian coffee is to speak of far more than just a drink. It is to tell a story of generations, of fertile soil and wise hands. It is to recognise the patience, faith and pride of those who, day by day, work beneath the Andean sun to offer the world an incomparable bean.

This book does not aim to be the final word, but rather to open doors — to reflection, admiration, and respect for the processes and people behind every cup. We hope that, by the time you turn the final page, you carry with you not only knowledge, but a feeling of connection to what Colombian coffee truly represents: identity, resilience, and artistry.

About Arraigo Coffee

Arraigo Coffee was born from a deep desire to honour our coffee-growing roots. Founded by a family with coffee heritage in the mountains of Caldas and an international outlook from London, Arraigo is a brand that unites tradition with modernity.

Our beans are grown at 1,750 metres above sea level in Aranzazu, Caldas, where coffee is not just a crop, but a way of life. Each lot is carefully selected, ethically processed, and roasted with great care to preserve its unique character.

At Arraigo, we believe coffee is culture, community and connection. That's why we proudly say: *"Coffee with roots, flavour with history."*

🔗 Follow us on Instagram: @arraigocoffee
🌐 Learn more at: www.arraigocoffee.com

Credits and Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the inspiration of Colombia's coffee growers — especially Don Alberto, whose love for the land has served as a beacon for generations.

To Julian, for connecting tradition with the present and carrying the voice of the countryside across borders.

To Luisa, for her vision, sensitivity, and the soul she brings to the Arraigo project.

To all the coffee-picking families, roasters, baristas, and consumers who believe in the value of well-crafted coffee.

And to you, the reader, for joining us on this journey. May every cup be a reminder of how important it is to care for our roots.

“Every sip of Colombian coffee is a seed of history, an echo of our mountains, and a bridge to our roots. Never underestimate the power of a cup to reconnect you with what truly matters.”

— Arraigo Coffee