

# Yirgacheffe Banko Jirimtiti natural – Ethiopia

Every year, our selection of traceable coffees from Ethiopia grows a little bit. This is an exciting process, since Ethiopia has always been one of the more challenging origins in terms of finding out where your coffee actually came from. Next to the Chelelektu and Konga coffees, we brought two more traceable coffees to Antwerp this year. There is the washed Burka Silinga, and this natural Banko Jirimtiti.

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## Yirgacheffe Banko Jirimtiti natural grade 1

This coffee takes its name from the farm and wet mill that produced it: Banko. It is located in Jirimtiti, Gedeb woreda. Hence the second part of its name.

We usually don't get excited very easily about a natural coffee, but when we do come across a beauty, there is just no denying the virtues of natural coffees. The acidity is what makes this natural Yirgacheffe stand out amongst other natural coffees. It lifts the quality way higher than the usual profile of ripe strawberries. It makes the coffee shine in all its complexity. Rich sweetness, medium acidity, big body and a predominant berry profile.

### The Yirgacheffe region

The Yirgacheffe coffee micro-region is located in Sidamo, but coffee from this region is marketed under its own name because of its distinctively complex profile. Sidamo, including the micro-regions, is Ethiopia's most productive coffee producing region. An increasing number of regions is being marketed under its own name, as understanding and mapping of Ethiopia's various coffee regions and profiles is getting more attention. In the Yirgacheffe region, quality coffee is typically grown at altitudes between 1700 and 1900m.

### Ethiopia growing regions

Coffee is mainly produced in the southwestern and southeastern parts of the country in the Oromia region and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People Regions (SNNPR), mostly by smallholder farmers on farms of less than 2 hectares on average. These producers supply about 95% of the country's total production. The coffee growing areas are divided into different regions, each maintaining their distinct flavour characteristics. The three main regions where Ethiopian coffee beans are grown are Harrar, Ghimbi, and Sidamo.

### Producing traditions

Coffee production in Ethiopia remains largely traditional, typically with limited use of fertilisers and pesticides and with a manual coffee cultivation system and drying methods. There are four different ways of producing coffee in Ethiopia: forest coffee, semi – forest coffee, garden coffee, and plantation coffee

- Forest coffee is a wild coffee grown under the shade of natural forest trees, with no defined owner.
- Semi-forest coffee farming is a system where a farmer living near to a forest coffee does some thinning and pruning on the forest coffee to finally claim ownership of the forest coffee. The thinning will allow adequate light to reach the coffee plant without exposing the plant to too much sunlight. The farmer who prunes and weeds the forest area claims to be the owner of the semi-forest coffee and collect the annual yield of the plant.
- Garden coffee is normally found in the vicinity of a farmer's residence. Farmers use organic fertilisers to produce Garden coffee and intercrop it with other crops.
- Plantation coffee grows on commercial farms, built by the government or private investors for export purposes. This type of coffee plantation most commonly applies fertilisers and herbicides.

### **Domestic consumption & export**

Half of the nationally produced coffee is destined for the domestic market. With a per capita consumption of 2.40kg, Ethiopia leads the African continent in domestic consumption. Coffee has both social and cultural value. It is mainly consumed during social events such as family gatherings, religious celebrations, and at times of mourning. Coffee supplied and traded in the local market usually has a lower quality. Typically, the locally sold coffee was meant for the export market at first, but the quality got rejected for the Ethiopian Commodities Exchange (ECX)'s standards. Despite the low quality, the coffee price in the local market is usually higher than export prices.

### **A true coffee nation**

Up to 20% of the population, directly or indirectly, has depended on coffee production and trading for a living for many generations. About fifteen million people grow the crop for a living, while hundreds of thousands of middlemen are involved in crop collection from farmers and in the supply to the export and domestic market. In 2014, Ethiopia was the world's fifth biggest coffee producing country and Africa's largest producer. Coffee is Ethiopia's number one source of export revenue, generating about 25-30 percent of the country's total export earnings.

### **ECX**

Ethiopia is one of the few countries where coffee trade is not liberalised. All coffee traders must purchase coffee through the ECX (Ethiopian Commodities Exchange) market with the only exceptions for cooperatives and large-scale growers. These can trade coffee internationally outside the ECX Market by merely obtaining quality certification from the ECX laboratories.

The Ethiopian government established the ECX to handle the marketing of agricultural commodities like coffee, sesame, and beans. Nearly all coffee is sold on the ECX floor either directly through organised coffee producer's cooperatives or middlemen. ECX is a public market facilitating institution that was established in 2008 with the help of USAID. The main reason for establishing ECX was to eliminate the huge number of middlemen involved in coffee distribution and to enable

coffee farmers to benefit from prevailing market prices. Coffee sold through ECX is considered as commodity coffee. Ethiopia mainly exports green beans with only a very small amount of roasted beans. Ethiopian coffee is currently 70-80% unwashed or sundried and 20-30% is washed.

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Coffee marketing takes place at three different marketing levels. The first is a primary level coffee transaction where coffee farmers and suppliers trade coffee at a local level. These markets are located near coffee farms. The second transaction chain operates at the ECX Addis Ababa floor where transactions are done in an open auction system. The third level is the usual international coffee market where exporters sell coffee to importers. The coffee export business is reserved for citizens of Ethiopia.

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## Country



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## Quality

Natural grade 1

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## Farm/Washing station

Yirgacheffe

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## Variety

Heirloom

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## Crop

2017

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## Comments

CPGP-3086-2: medium acidity, rich, red fruit, coating body, complex, bright, consistent | Score: 88

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## Location

Yirgacheffe, Gedeo Zone, SNNPR

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## Exporter

Primrose

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