

Coffee Plantation in India, Regions, History, Requirements

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Coffee Plantation in India is a globally significant agricultural activity linking biodiversity conservation, tribal livelihoods, export earnings, and international trade. Coffee is the **second** most traded commodity worldwide after crude oil, with nearly 2.25 billion cups consumed daily across the world. **India ranks seventh globally** in coffee production and area under cultivation. Indian coffee is internationally valued for being shade-grown in ecologically sensitive regions, supporting sustainable farming, biodiversity preservation, and socio-economic development of remote hill communities.

Coffee Plantation in India

Coffee Plantation in India covers about 4.45 lakh hectares and contributes significantly to agricultural exports and rural employment. India cultivates both Arabica and Robusta coffee in nearly equal proportions, mainly in the Western and **Eastern Ghats**. Around 70% of India's coffee output is exported, making it a major foreign exchange earner. Indian coffee enjoys a premium image globally due to shade-grown methods, mild acidity, rich aroma, and sustainable tribal cultivation practices.

Coffee Plantation in India Historical Development

The history of Coffee Plantation in India traces back to spiritual travel, colonial expansion, and commercial agriculture development.

1. **Baba Budan Introduction (1600 AD):** Seven Mocha seeds planted at Baba Budan Giri, Karnataka, initiated Indian coffee cultivation.
2. **Ethiopian Origin:** Coffee originated in Kaffa province of Ethiopia before spreading to Yemen and India.
3. **Arab Domestication:** Arabs first domesticated coffee in Yemen, shaping early trade routes.
4. **British Commercial Expansion (18th Century):** British planters established organized plantations in South India.
5. **Colonial Infrastructure:** Roads, curing works, and export systems expanded coffee trade.
6. **Global Recognition:** Indian coffee gained identity as high-quality shade-grown coffee worldwide.

Coffee Plantation in India Requirements

Coffee Plantation in India depends on specific pedo-climatic conditions ensuring quality yield and flavor.

1. **Soil Type:** Deep, fertile, organic-rich, well-drained soils with slight acidity support coffee growth.
2. **Rainfall Needs:** Annual rainfall between 1000-2500 mm ensures flowering and berry development.
3. **Temperature Range:** Arabica prefers 15-25°C, while Robusta grows well at 20-30°C.
4. **Elevation:** Arabica thrives at 1000-1500 meters, Robusta at 500-1000 meters.
5. **Shade Requirement:** Thick natural shade protects plants and enhances bean quality.
6. **Humidity Levels:** Relative humidity between 70-90% is essential for healthy plantations.

Coffee Plantation in India Regions

Coffee Plantation in India regions are classified into traditional, non-traditional and north-eastern zones based on climate and geography. The top 3 Coffee Producing States in India as of 2022-23 are: Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu collectively producing 96% of total coffee.

1. **Traditional Regions:** features shade-grown coffee in the **Western Ghats**, include regions-
 - Karnataka: dominates over 70% of India's coffee, led by Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru.
 - Kerala: Wayanad and Idukki are major Robusta-producing districts.
 - Tamil Nadu: Nilgiris, Dindigul, and Theni grow high-altitude Arabica coffee.
2. **Non-traditional Regions:** known for organic, tribal-based cultivation in the Eastern Ghats.
 - Andhra Pradesh: Araku Valley and Alluri Sitharama Raju district promote tribal coffee farming.
 - Odisha: Koraput and Rayagada districts support organic coffee cultivation.
3. **North-East Pockets:** small-scale plantations are emerging under suitable hill climates. Regions include-
 - Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.

Coffee Board

The Coffee Board plays a central role in regulating, promoting, and expanding Coffee Plantation in India.

1. **Statutory Status:** Established under the Coffee Act 1942, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

2. Headquarters Location: Based in Bengaluru, Karnataka, overseeing national coffee development.
3. Functions: The major functions of the Coffee Board are:
 - Integrated Coffee Development Project: Focuses on yield improvement, replantation, and sustainability.
 - Non-Traditional Expansion: Identifies new cultivation zones using remote sensing and soil analysis.
 - Tribal Empowerment: Supports tribal farmers through training, finance, and market access.
 - Export Promotion: Enhances branding, quality certification, and international market presence.

Coffee Plantation in India Significance

The importance of Coffee Plantation in India can be discussed below:

- India produces about 3.6 lakh tonnes of coffee annually, exporting nearly 70% to 128 countries, reflecting strong global demand for Indian coffee.
- Consumption increased from 84,000 tonnes in 2012 to 91,000 tonnes in 2023, making plantation crucial in India.
- Specialty coffees such as Monsooned Malabar AA, Mysore Nuggets Extra Bold, and Kaapi Royale are gaining global recognition and higher returns.
- Initiatives like Flavour of India- Fine Cup Awards and Know Your Kaapi (KYK) highlight quality excellence, with Koraput Coffee emerging nationally.

Coffee Plantation in India Recent Developments

Recent developments have strengthened India's global coffee profile through diplomacy, sustainability, and trade.

1. **5th World Coffee Conference (2023):** Hosted in Bengaluru with over 80 countries and 2,400 delegates. The theme focused on sustainability, circular economy, and regenerative agriculture.
2. **Araku Coffee at G20:** Tribal-grown Araku coffee featured in G20 summit as a gift for leaders.
3. **GI Certification:** India has secured GI tags for 7 coffees, including Coorg Arabica, Wayanad Robusta, Araku Valley Arabica, and Monsooned Malabar, boosting premium pricing.
4. **Export Surge:** Coffee exports rose from USD 719 million in 2020-21 to about double as USD 1.29 billion in FY 2023-24 and USD 1.8 billion in FY 2024-25 (5th largest global exporter).
5. **GST Reduction:** Reduction of GST to 5% on instant and processed coffee products.
6. **Trade Agreements:** India-UK CETA and India-EFTA TEPA (2024) provide zero-duty access to key premium markets for Indian coffee.
7. **Tribal-led models:** TDCCOL's Koraput Coffee initiative ensures fair pricing, doorstep procurement, and sustainable livelihoods, supported by the Coffee Board.

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