

THE PHILIPPINE COFFEE INDUSTRY

Just like its flavor, Philippine coffee has a rich history. The first coffee tree was introduced in Lipa, Batangas in 1740 by a Spanish Franciscan monk. From there, coffee growing spread to other parts of Batangas, allowing the province to grow in wealth over the decades. Lipa eventually became the coffee capital of the Philippines.



Photo credit: Philippine Coffee Board

In the 1860s, Batangas was already selling coffee to America, through San Francisco, and subsequently, with the opening of the Suez Canal, the Europe market opened. By 1880, the Philippines had become the fourth largest exporter of coffee beans, and when the coffee rust hit Brazil, Africa, and Java, it became the only source of coffee beans worldwide.

Unfortunately, by the end of the decade, the coffee rust eventually reached the Philippine shores, destroying all the coffee trees in Batangas. The Philippine coffee industry experienced ups and downs thereafter and never recovered its glory days.¹

However, all is not lost for the Philippine coffee industry. Coffee is grown in 50 countries along the equatorial zone called, “The Bean Belt”. Interestingly, the Philippines lies within the Bean Belt. Blessed with favorable climate and soil conditions, from the lowland to the mountain regions, the Philippines is also one of the few countries that produces the four varieties of commercially-viable coffee - Liberica, Excelsa, Robusta and Arabica.

In 1980, the Philippines became a member of the International Coffee Organization, a group of importing and exporting coffee nations.

According to the Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI-VOCA), an American non-government organization providing technical support to the Philippine coffee farmers, there are positive trends for the Philippine coffee industry – coffee consumption is on the uptick and there are now more skilled farmers. The ACDI/VOCA notes that Philippine coffee has already penetrated the markets in Canada, Japan, and New Zealand and that the domestic market continues to be strong, particularly for specialized coffee (Arabica coffee with a cup score of at least 80 points).²



Photo credit: Philippine Coffee Board

While Philippine coffee production remains relatively low and is unable to even meet local consumption demand (coffee production was at 62,062 metric tons of green coffee beans in 2019 but Filipinos consume 100,000 metric tons of coffee a year and drink almost as much coffee as the people of the United States, Brazil, Japan and the European Union), the Philippines is looking to be one of the leading producers of top-grade coffee around the world.

¹Philippine Coffee Board Inc., www.philcoffeeboard.com.

² "American NGO says PH coffee industry in 'good trend'", by Lilian Mellejor, published on 6 February 2019, Philippines News Agency. Accessed on 29 August 2020.

Through the Philippine Coffee Industry Roadmap 2017-2022, the country is expected to raise coffee production seven-fold by 2022, bringing the coffee industry at par with that of Brazil, Colombia, Vietnam, the Honduras, and Indonesia. Through the coffee roadmap, the Philippine government aims to guarantee a coffee industry that is cost-competitive, aligned with global quality standards, reliable and environment-friendly, which will provide sustainable benefits to farmers, processors, traders, and exporters, and the Philippine food security and poverty alleviation.³

Coffee Manufacturers in the Philippines

There are several local small and medium coffee processors of roasted beans and ground coffee in the Philippines.

Nestle Philippines, Inc., located in Cagayan de Oro, is the largest local processor of soluble coffee, which accounts for 80% of the instant coffee market. It is followed by Universal Robina Corporation and Commonwealth Foods Corp.⁴



Major Coffee Brands in the Philippines, 2012

COFFEE MANUFACTURER'S BRAND/S	MANUFACTURERS
Cafe Puro	Commonwealth Foods, Inc.
Great Taste, Blend 45	Universal Robina Corp.
Jimm's	Goldshine Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
Kaffe de Oro	Century Pacific Group (Snow Mountain Dairy Corp)
Koffie	Regent Foods Corp.
Nescafe	Nestle Philippines, Inc.



Aside from the aforementioned Philippine manufacturers' brands, there are also locally-made ground coffee brands available in the market, such as Aguinaldo Blend, Altura Coffee, Café Amadeo, Café de Lipa, Café Chico, Coffee Alamid (civet coffee), Davao coffee (variants Robusta, Arabica and Excelsa), Gourmet Café, Kalinga blend, Kalinga Robusta premium coffee, Kalinga brew, Kalinga Musang coffee, Kape Isa, Magallaya brew premium coffee (Excelsa), Monk's Blend, Mt. Apo Civet Coffee, Inc., Musang coffee roasted bean, Negros Rainforest, Rocky Mountain (variants of

Mountain Blend and Classic Blend), and Sagada coffee. These products are manufactured by entrepreneurs, mostly operating on a small scale, and are primarily named after the place where they are produced.⁵

With the rise of the third coffee wave and growing focus on the origin, whether ethically-sourced and directly traded, and quality of the coffee beans, more new local coffee players are emerging, such as Primal Brew, Kalsada Coffee, Figures of Beans, Kape Maria, SGD Coffee, Gourmet Farms, Basilio Coffee, Cafe-Te-Ria, BrewsCo, Daybreak Coffee, Dipbrew Coffee Co., Great Basket Third Wave Coffee, Sinag Coffee Roastery, Everyday Coffee Roasters, Original Grounds Coffee Co., Fresh Batch, Commune PH, Comfy Beans, Henry & Sons, Stout Coffee PH, Mr. Beans Coffee, Beanhi, Coffee for Peace and Coffeellera, among others.^{6,7,8}

³ "DTI sees bright prospects ahead for Philippine coffee industry", Business Mirror, published on 24 April 2018.

⁴ Department of Agriculture and Department of Trade and Industry, 2017-2022 Philippine Coffee Industry Roadmap.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Filipino Coffee brands I've been loving (Part 1), The Tummy Train. Posted on 27 April 2019, www.thetummytrain.com.

⁷ "Where to get local coffee beans, grounds for delivery", by Steph Arnaldo. Posted on 9 June 2020, www.rappler.com.

- For the **Directory of Philippine Coffee Exporters**, [please click here](#).
- For the **Importers and Distributors of Philippine Coffee in British Columbia**, [please click here](#).