



GENETICS, ECONOMICS AFFECT QUALITY

## DO TODAY'S COFFEES LEAVE A BAD TASTE?

If you've only recently discovered the delicious taste of specialty coffees, you might be surprised to learn that many experts think today's coffees aren't as good as yesterday's.

Simply a touch of nostalgia? Not really. We think it's a pretty accurate assessment. Finding coffee that meets our high standards is getting to be more of a challenge all the time.

Part of the blame rests with the popularity of specialty coffees—and the demand that creates. Growers are constantly on the lookout for ways to increase their yields and protect their trees from weather extremes. Scientists are hard at work creating "better" beans.

But more coffee doesn't necessarily translate to better coffee. In fact, the opposite appears to be true. The hardier, more prolific beans lose much of the distinctive flavor and identity that sets specialty coffees apart. The net result is a coffee that's more consistent, but less interesting.

Do bigger, healthier coffee crops mean the growers are doing better? You might think so, but that isn't often the case. Larger crops of beans tend to drive down the prices (except at times when weather conditions like Brazil's recent droughts impact the world's coffee supply).

What's more, many of these new coffees don't have a natural resistance to diseases and insect pests, so growers are forced to use chemical fertilizers and pesticides. You don't have to be an environmentalist to know what that can mean to local ecologies—or to the workers who walk among the trees picking each coffee cherry by hand.

Good coffee isn't disappearing, but it's getting harder for us to find. For you, it's not as tough. It may sound a little self-serving, but if you're after the best, choose a coffee roaster like us. We have the expertise and market knowledge that lets us find the best beans. Then we *cup* (sample) them to ensure they meet our standards. If we can't find what we're looking for, we don't buy. Period. That's because we don't gain anything if we lower our standards—and neither do you. Now, can we offer you another cup? ☺

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### COFFEE BREAK

*For the best cup, match your grind to your brewer. Plunger pots require coarser grinds, drip brewers, medium grinds, cone brewers, fine grinds, espresso machines, powdery grinds.*

